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The

Cresset

O. P. KRETZMANN, *Editor*

JOHN STRIETELMEIER, *Managing Editor*

VICTOR F. HOFFMANN, *Associate Managing Editor*

ROBERT W. BERTRAM, *Associate Managing Editor*

IN THE DECEMBER CRESSET

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In Luce Tua

Comment on the Significant News by the Editors

The New Illusion

MAN LIVES BY his illusions. For well over a decade now, we have sought to exorcise the specter of a nuclear war by pretending that the way to avoid it was by preparing for it. Whether we ever really believed such a Through-the-Looking-glass proposition is hard to say. Certainly few of us do now. Most of us expect war, if not today or this year, then tomorrow or next year. And so, with one illusion shattered, we have set about building a new one: that though we may not be able to avoid the war, we can still come out of it with our personal and national necks relatively intact, if we reverse the process of civilization and make a bee-line back to the cave, physically and sociologically.

The gimmick to which many people are looking for this miracle of survival is the family fallout shelter. Shelter sales have been brisk, and a nice scholastic argument has developed around the question whether a man is justified in shooting his neighbors to prevent them from moving in on his shelter-protected family when the big Boom comes. Moral theology being at best a tricky area for all but the subtlest minds, we would like to propose several questions of a simpler and more practical nature for the consideration of the potential fallout-shelter customer:

1. (To be answered after a long, rainy weekend during which the whole family has been cooped up in the house.) What are the hazards involved in a number of people of various ages being housed, in an atmosphere of anxiety, in a space equivalent to the size of one bedroom for a period of up to two consecutive weeks? Princeton University recently experimented with a family which was encased in a model shelter for two weeks. One child developed "overt signs of regression." Two adults suffered daily attacks of vertigo so severe as to incapacitate them. Another family gave up after four days. (Reported by Elmer B. Sterner in *One,* November, 1961, page 17)

2. (To be answered on the afternoon of Christmas Day when every store in town is closed and you suddenly remember that there isn't a speck of food in the house.) What are you going to eat? Plants and animals will be contaminated. Canned goods? If the cans have not been damaged – and only for as long as the supply lasts.

3. (To be answered only by those who have experienced the breakdown of law enforcement that follows such natural disasters as earthquakes or floods.) Do you feel competent to protect yourself and your family from robbery and outrage under conditions which, for some unpredictable period of time, must approach anarchy?

4. (To be answered only by long-time residents of Hamburg, Coventry, or Hiroshima.) Bearing in mind that one ten-megaton bomb is approximately eleven times more powerful than all of the bombs dropped by both sides during World War II, and recalling your own experience with bomb shelters during the War, how many people do you think might survive a direct hit upon New York City? Chicago? Los Angeles? Philadelphia? Detroit? Of those who do survive, how many do you think will still be happy to have survived two weeks after the event?

5. (To be answered by everyone.) Have you ever seen, or smelled, an unembalmed corpse two weeks old? Would you expect to find any such corpses lying about when you step out of your shelter? Is there any possibility that you might have to adjust to the presence of one in your shelter?

"The Fault, Dear Brutus"

This sort of talk may sound defeatist. It is not meant to be. Indeed, it is intended to offset the kind of defeatist talk which would send us all scurrying for shelter as though war were some kind of natural catastrophe which could not be avoided by any effort of man.

We are trying to say two things: that war can be

avoided and that it must be avoided. The *must* is implicit in the very nature of the weapons which are now available to the potential combatants. And the *can* presupposes that we start our reasoning from an acceptance of the *must*.

We have still to get through our thick heads the single most elementary fact of the Nuclear Age: that mankind has a sufficient supply of weapons in being to destroy itself. Unless all of man's past experience is misleading, these weapons will be used at some stage in any war that involves the Great Powers. The use of these weapons will make this planet uninhabitable. *Ergo,* these weapons must not be used, which means that the Great Powers must not go to war with each other.

We would estimate the odds against a Third World War within the next fifty years at about 1 in 100. It is the one chance that we have to focus upon, with all of the single-mindedness of which we are capable. This means that we must be fanatically dedicated to finding the needle in the haystack and we must not be diverted by any side interest, whether it be maintaining our own pride, preserving our national identity, maintaining our standard of living, or whatever. The issue is survival, with as large a measure of freedom as circumstances permit. It may be granted that there is a point beyond which mere survival is not enough. We should be doing some hard thinking about where that point lies. For ourself, if it comes to a decision between being Red or dead, we prefer to be dead. But we are not sure that this personal decision of ours is one which the majority of mankind would be willing to make, if forced to the choice.

Against the background of this *must* we insist that the Final War *can* be avoided — not by speeding up the armaments race (although the preservation of a balance of terror may have some short-term value) and certainly not by converting ourselves into a nation of moles. We hold, with that singularly unromatic apostle, St. James, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" and that the present distress offers Christian people an opportunity unique in history to demonstrate the power of intercessory prayer. (Pause here to allow all of our practical, hard-headed readers to recover from convulsive laughter.) We hold, with the Lutheran Confessions, that there is a civic righteousness which is by the Law, and that this righteousness carries its own rewards — among which might be peace, if mankind wanted peace badly enough to guide itself by those moral principles which, in all of its great religions, promise peace. (Another pause for laughter.) We hold, in the words of the preamble to the United Nations charter, that wars begin in the hearts and minds of men, that they are not what insurance men call "acts of God," and that they can, therefore, be avoided by the deliberate decisions of men.

We do not, as a matter of fact, think that mankind will avoid the Final War. Many of us continue to chain-smoke cigarettes despite the nearly conclusive evidence that points to a link between cigarette-smoking and lung cancer. Most of us will continue to move inch by inch toward the brink of war despite our professed desire for peace. But let us at least move forward with our eyes open, fully aware that we are writing our own doom, and fully prepared to accept the consequences of our own decisions. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves . . ."

The Cost of Peace

Last month a friend of ours left his office in Rio de Janeiro at eleven o'clock one morning and walked in the front door of his home in Cleveland at one o'clock the following morning. In terms of time, Rio is as close to Cleveland by jet as St. Louis is by car or train. In terms of our traditional ways of thinking about the world, Rio is almost as remote as the moon.

We don't particularly like this new pattern of things. If we had our druthers, the United States would still be what it was to our great-great grandfather, a haven from the turmoils and alarums of the rest of the world. We still have enough southern Indiana provincialism in us to make us doubt and mistrust any "furriner," including those Yankee rascals in northern Indiana. If the world had waited for us to invent the airplane or the rocket or even the automobile, it would still be waiting.

But the jet plane and the rocket exist, and we live in a world in which they exist. And because they exist there is no longer any such thing as a sovereign nation in the old sense of the term. Because they exist, the life of a middle-aged editor in Valparaiso, Indiana, is influenced far more by events that happen in Havana and Saigon and Novaya Zemlya than by anything that is likely to happen in South Bend or Kokomo, Indiana.

If it is peace that we want — and peace today is synonymous with survival — we shall have to organize it on a basis large enough and inclusive enough to be effective. The last line of "The Internationale" prophesies the day when "the international soviet will be the human race." What vision, equally large and daring, do we have to oppose to this Marxist vision? Have we yet come to the point where we can think of the human race as any sort of unity or are we still thinking in terms of a pre-jet, pre-rocket world?

Our national forebears made the tremendous leap from loyalty to a state to loyalty to a confederation of states. They made the leap because they were realistic men who knew that if they did not hang together they would most assuredly hang separately. We are faced with the necessity of making the next great leap, from loyalty to a nation to some larger loyalty — to the North Atlantic community, perhaps, as an intermediate stage, but ultimately to all of humanity.

As a concomitant to this necessity, we are faced with the necessity of recognizing that this little world of our will not long tolerate the existence of wasteful affluence side by side with dehumanizing poverty. We

shall share our good things, or we shall have them taken away from us.

One world, one rule of law, one economy — these are the realities which we must deal with either by way of acceptance or denial. The acceptance of these realities means an enormous sacrifice of much that we have long held dear. The denial of these realities means war and probable annihilation. What do we want, and what are we willing to pay for it?

James Thurber

The dog lying at our feet as we write this has never read the work of James Thurber (though she once chewed up one of his books), and she has never looked at any of Thurber's bemused hounds (though the resemblance is startling). Like all dogs, she has never taken the time to see herself as others see her.

It is a happy accident of our over-specialized era that what Thurber did for dogs he did as well — perhaps better — for people, and his death has deprived us of one of our clearest looking-glasses. Whether he was describing the alarmed motorist who finds one of his dashboard gauges registering an astronomical figure (it turns out to be the radio), or chronicling "The War Between the Men and the Women," or wading into the complexities of English grammer (trying, for example, to make an adverb out of "lovely"), or even writing one of his captivating children's books, Thurber had everyone's number. He knew humanity's foibles and he loved them dearly.

Now that Thurber is gone, we wonder uneasily who is going to protect us from such foolish new words as "rurban" (Newspeak for "rural-urban"), and from such bondages as are implicit in automatic toothbrushes. Who will tell us our name (Walter Mitty) or what it is that denies us sleep (that blasted seal leaning on the headboard)? There was so much that we saw through Thurber's blind eyes. It won't be easy to find another man whose criticisms combine so much sympathy with so much uncommon sense.

Merry Whatchamacallit

One of our readers has sent us a copy of the Christmas program in which his eight-year-old daughter participated last year. Number One item on the program, immediately after the Greetings, was something called "Hanukkah." This was followed by the singing of a Hanukkah song, and this, in turn, by a number of Christmas pieces. The final item on the program, a music festival, included three Christian carols, two Hanukkah songs, a Huron Indian carol ("The Moon of Wintertime"), and a secular English carol.

Our reader's daughter was the First Narrator in a piece of business called "A Time of Hope." Her narration was a short one, and we reproduce it in full:

> For many years people have been trying to tell the meaning of Christmas. We know that in its deepest sense it is a religious festival, a celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Christ. To Christians there can be no higher thought, but in a way, Christmas has another meaning. It is a time for showing kindness, a time for brotherhood, a time for a special friendliness. It is a people's festival which men of all beliefs may join.
>
> We would like to tell you in words and in song what Christmas means to us. Perhaps we are trying to give not so much the meaning of Christmas as the feeling of Christmas. Christmas is a time for fun, for toys, for decking the halls, for dancing and clapping, for inviting Santa to climb down the chimney.

We can not speak for our Jewish friends and neighbors — not to mention our agnostic friends. But we are sure that we speak for many a concerned Christian when we say that this sort of thing is offensive in the radical sense that our Lord had in mind when He said that "whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." A child can be taught to respect another child's faith without being compelled to lie. A child can be taught that there are good people in this world who deny the divinity of our Lord without being compelled to participate in the denial.

A program of this sort may be inoffensive to that vast majority of our people who have no religious convictions to be offended. It is certainly offensive to a convinced Christian. We should think that it would be equally offensive to a convinced Jew or a sincere agnostic. Neither Christmas nor Hanukkah is a "people's festival." We are prepared to wish Pope John a Merry Christmas, Mr. Ben-Gurion a Happy Hanukkah, and Mrs. Vashti McCollum a Happy Xmas, but the only person to whom we think it would be appropriate to send Happy People's Festival greetings is Mr. Khrushchev, who is not on our list.

The Creative Person

For six years, a group of University of California scientists have been conducting a study of "the creative person." In the course of the study, some 530 creative persons were subjected to psychological examinations and tests of manipulative skills. The data thus obtained have been run through the computers and have produced some surprising conclusions.

The old myth that creativity is a form of madness has, for instance, been pretty well exploded. Creative people appear to be no more or less emotionally disturbed than are other people. There seems also to be no strong correlation between creativity and intelligence. While an IQ of 120 appears to be minimal for the creative person, above that level the IQ figure doesn't make much difference.

By way of generalization, the researchers describe the creative person as intelligent, independent, curious,

skeptical, emotionally committed to his work, energetic, aesthetically sensitive, introverted, nonconformist, occasionally egotistical, and virtually always actuated by a sense of destiny. Typically – and significantly – creative people do not have brilliant academic records. Many drop out of school early because the schools fail to recognize their high creative potential and penalize their off-beat methods of learning in grading. In their preliminary report, the researchers note that "many don't have the academic record that would get them admitted to most graduate schools today. By our methods of academic selection in graduate schools, we are missing some of the individuals with high creative potential."

Any one who has taught will find these comments agreeable to his own intuitive judgments. There is a core of folk wisdom in the gross over-generalization that "them as can do and them as can't teach." Most of us who teach really don't know what to do with the creative person. He lives in a different world from ours – a world where axioms are challengeable even on a true-false test and where there may be several right answers to a completion question. Introverted as he is, the creative person may show up poorly in seminars and class discussions where the emphasis is upon participation. "Bright but undisciplined" is the notation that we send to his counselor on his deficiency report and thus, for all practical purposes, lump him with the disciplined dullard in that unassorted ten to fifteen percent of the student body that is "not making normal progress toward a degree."

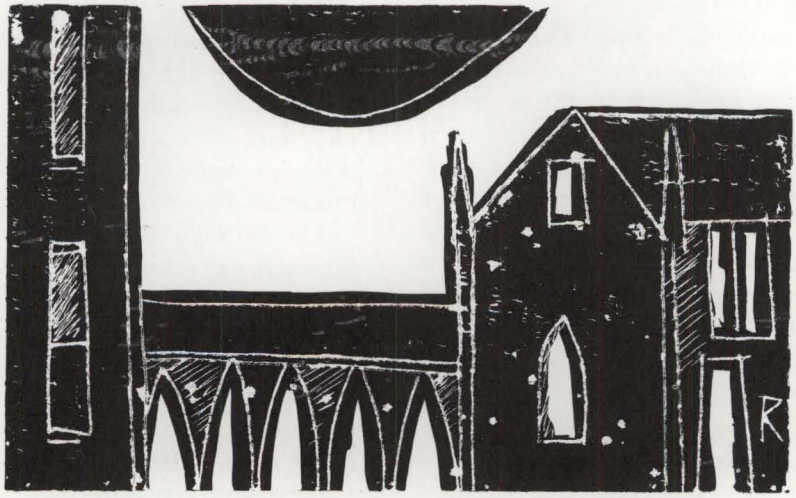
Having spoken our *mea culpa,* however, we would like to enter a plea of mitigating circumstances. The rarer gifts of God – of which creativity is one – can hardly be made the norm in any such mass enterprise as education. Desirable as it might be to staff our schools and colleges with creative people, there just aren't enough to go around, and there is much in teaching that does not appeal to creative people. We find such consolation as we can in the conviction, which seems to be substantiated by experience, that creative people do, somehow or other, end up for the most part doing creative work. And since we have always had a very modest estimate of the benefits to be derived from formal education, we are not sure that the creative person would profit from any reforms that would keep him in school any longer.

Signs of the Times

Our Number Two Son, normal in every other respect, has begun to show signs of developing into an editorial writer. Actually it all began a year ago during the presidential campaign. At that time the rest of our family was subjected to a running commentary on the capabilities of Mr. Nixon and the doubtful competence of Mr. Kennedy. In recent weeks the burthen of his message has dealt with bombs and testing with an occasional critical commentary on the intercollegiate football situation.

The boy still has a far piece to go before we would feel safe in turning this section over to him, but he is on his way. One night recently he dropped an epigram which we think deserves whatever immortalization print can confer. After listening to Chet Huntley describe the destructive potential of the neutron bomb, our young editorialist mumbled: "I'm going to grow hair and start biting people."

This, it seems to us, is as neat a way of summing up the progressive bestialization of man as we have heard. And yet it lacks one thing. "When these things begin to happen," our Lord said, "when men begin to turn into beasts and the world becomes a jungle of eaters and the eaten, then look up, for your redemption draweth nigh!" When men grow hair and start biting each other it is time for Christmas to remind us that He Who came will come, according to the promise which He gave us before He went away.



robert charles brown

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Christmas and Wassail

BY ALFRED R. LOOMAN

AN ORGANIZATION using the slogan, "Put Christ back into Christmas," has been combating the commercialism and pagan practices of the Christmas season for many years without any significant success. How far they have to go was indicated by a news item last year which reported that when two women were looking at a manger scene in a department store window, one of them said, "Well can you beat that? Now the churches are trying to take over Christmas!"

It's true, the churches have been trying to take over Christmas for the last 1600 years. The first person on record who complained of the manner in which Christmas was celebrated was St. Gregory, who warned against excessive indulgence in gluttony, dancing, and taking part in plays, and who urged his people to celebrate Christmas "after a heavenly and not an earthly manner." To give you an idea of how long this struggle has been going on, St. Gregory made his plea around the year 380.

The time of year has had something to do with the manner of celebrating and the pagans were honoring deities in December long before the date of Christmas was established. Perhaps the best known of these pagan events was the Roman Saturnalia, which honored Saturn, their god of agriculture. It ran from mid-December to the first of the year and during that period there was a great deal of eating, drinking, gift-exchanging, and visiting. Most of the celebrating was on the riotous side.

Also at this time of the winter solstice, the Teutonic tribes honored Woden by slaughtering animals for the winter meat supply. This was accompanied by feasting and driking around huge bonfires. Most countries, in fact, had some similar festival which they observed at this time of the year.

From these pagan festivals came many of our Christmas traditions and customs, including the use of greenery, the decoration of homes, exchanging gifts, and general rejoicing, all of which have been incorporated in a modified form in the Christian celebration of Christmas.

Those Christmas magazines with the pretty colored pictures often contain stories on the origin of Christmas customs, but they do not go back far enough. Their stories usually are accompanied by sketches of 19th-century Europeans engaging in some modestly jolly Yuletide tradition. Their readers, and perhaps their editors, would be shocked if they went a little further in their tracing of origins and found they would have to show a picture of, say, a peasant in Gaul dancing around a log fire some time in the first century, a green branch in one hand and a slab of beef in the other.

Since the exact date of Christ's birth is not known, for the first three hundred years of Christianity it was celebrated on such varying dates as January 6, February 2, March 25, April 19, May 20, and November 17. Finally, in 350, the date was set and generally accepted as December 25. Among the many reasons given as to why this date was chosen, the most reasonable one suggested by Church authorities is that it was deliberately set to correspond with the pagan celebrations.

This argument sounds logical because the Church on many other occasions has substituted the sacred for the secular, not only to replace the secular, but also to make it easier for converts to adjust. The Church of England used this same approach centuries later when it set carols to popular secular tunes.

Most of the original secular and pagan practices have survived and grown over the years and every European country has added to the traditions and customs of Christmas. Feasting and drinking seem always to have been a part of the celebration and the only person I know of who took advantage of this fact was George Washington. He crossed the Delaware on Christmas, 1776, and successfully attacked the Hessian camp, figuring, correctly, that the German mercenaries would be celebrating by eating and drinking as they would have celebrated back home.

Only one government, prior to the Communist regime, has been successful in stopping these secular practices and that was the Puritan government of England under Cromwell in 1642. It not only stopped the secular practices; it stopped the religious observance of Christmas as well and made shops stay open, forbade religious services, feasting, and the lighting of Christmas candles, and sent criers through the streets calling "No Christmas."

Traditions and customs are extremely difficult to overcome and secular practices will be with us at Christmas time so long as this season continues to be an expression of sentimentality rather than sentiment. The pagans had a head start and their influence will continue unless and until we can transmit to others the true peace and joy we experience at Christ's birth.

On Going by Foot

By J. E. Saveson
Associate Professor of English
Valparaiso University

IF ONE WANTS TO go by foot, he must go to Europe and preferably to England and preferably to Cambridge, for the art of walking is nowhere so highly cultivated as in the old university town. One reason I think of is that inhabitants of the North Country have since the seventeenth century and perhaps earlier come to Cambridge in large numbers. Cambridgeshire is fenny and flat, and there is no incline steep enough to challenge the leg of a man from the Peaks, the Westmoreland Fells, the Scottish Highlands. What is lacking in tension must be made up for in pace.

And the pace can be furious I discovered one Sunday afternoon on my way to the lodgings of a friend who lived some three miles out. Having just missed one bus, I had settled myself on a low post to wait for another. The sun, what there was of it, fell down through the yellow pendants of the laburnums; and in the gardens bulb flowers blazed with an un-English intensity in the chill air of the northern spring. A time to ease the soul, but I had no sooner slipped into Eden than the fingers of a thick hand fell into the valleys between my ribs and hauled me off my post and a thick Scots voice pulled me from my dream.

"Are ye going to the party, man?" asked Angus. "Well, then, let's walk. It's not far and we'll save threepence."

"A penny a mile," I calculated bitterly, but such thoughts were soon chased from my mind by the effort required to catch my breath. Angus had walked three-quarters of a mile already. The pleasure of being out of his chair and away from his books had made him delirious. He was avid of speed, glad animal movements. And to erase the scratches put on his mind by looking long hours at the handwriting of Dr. Arbuthnot in letters to Alexander Pope, he chose to speak of that year's Scottish potato crop. I threw in, whenever I could manage not to gasp aloud, some remarks on Idaho bakers and Indiana reds; but the effort was too much. We beat the bus, but at what a cost.

At the door I fell into the arms of my hostess, who revived me with a glass of sherry and led me to a chair in a corner. Here I was set upon by an Egyptian girl, whose English was none of the best but who sought me out because I was an American and, therefore, sympathetic to her country. It was about the time that John Foster Dulles on a flying visit to Cairo delivered from President Eisenhower to Colonel Nasser or to Colonel Naguib a present of a brace of pistols. Englishmen were pigs in her opinion, and she disliked especially, hated to distraction, the wife of the British ambassador to Egypt during the war. "Lady L.....L..... thought she was the Queen of Egypt," my new friend asserted, curling her lip. "When she went out in the evening, she always wore a throne on her head." The last thing I heard before I dropped off was the deadly tone of a passing Englishman. "How impressive," he said, including me in his contempt for plotting colonials and in his weary awareness of the white man's burden.

Another reason for walking in Cambridge, especially in some enclosed space such as a garden, is the fact that it is thought to be a condition of the noblest intellection. Whoever breathes the Cambridge air inhales an elixir; and it may be that the mixture is compounded in and is wafted across the city from the Fellows Gardens, which are laid out with exquisite care along the river. And, too, I am inclined to Swift's opinion that the introspective spirit of modern learning is like the activity of the spider who spins its web out of its own substance; whereas the spirit of the ancients is like the distillations of the bee, who collects honey from nature, that is to say, collects all knowledge that is true and sound, that is sweetness and light. And I am inclined further to his opinion that empty speculations and vainglorious enterprises originate in some disturbance in the coarser parts of the body. A rapid turn round a garden wall will clear the brain; and the stinging scent of crushed grass can free the mind from the prison of the self.

The Anti-Tobacconist

I went through some torment before I understood this thoroughly Cantabrigian point. My instructor was my tutor, a waspish individual with a twisted vein of humor and a metaphysical wit, who was, in the final sum of things, most kind. We managed in a majority of cases to strike a common chord; but we disagreed over the smell of burning tobacco. Our first interview took place in his library, a faded, panelled, book-lined place. I suppose that he was more concerned then than he was later to have the upper hand. In any case he thrust at me some pages of French for quick translation; he discussed and dissected the argument of my essay; he demanded finer and finer distinctions in the meaning of my terms. After half an hour, feeling much like a mouse stalked by a needle-toothed, needle-clawed cat, and feeling, when he walked behind me to pull down a book, that the cat was about to leap upon my head, I lighted a cigarette which I was obliged to put out immediately, for he complained in the tone of offended royalty that the smell would linger.

This first encounter made me apprehensive; and since, once the tutor's sting was spent, he was the mildest

and most empathic of men, he made a prolonged effort to put me at my ease. He thought the room in which we talked had something to do with my nervousness; therefore he arranged tutorials in several parts of the house – a meandering, Tudor-styled place, set well back from the road on a large, park-like piece of ground. He tried meeting me in the drawing room. The Italian maid, who had almost no English, pointed me to a comfortable chair by the hearth and turned on the electric fire, one of the broadest gestures an Englishman can make. He let me grow accustomed to my surroundings, a mixture of furnishings from the 1920's and the eighteenth century, with photographs of the tutor as a boy, a student in the Temple, as a Cambridge don. No one could remain fearful in such a threefold guise. At last he would enter, saying, "Don't get up"; efface himself in a chair opposite; and only gradually slip into the subject of what I'd been doing since he'd seen me last. Unfortunately these courtesies enlarged the time I went without a cigarette, for he forbade me to smoke here absolutely. His mother sat in the room much of the day – a small thin, erect, and commanding old lady of eighty, whose first remark to visitors was, more often than not, that the smell of tobacco smoke was disgusting.

And sometimes we met in a bare, unfinished, closet-like room on the ground floor, where he kept the overflow of his books. Because I knew that no one spent any time there, I ventured to ask to have a cigarette, promising to blow the smoke out the window. But he put me off, saying that the smell might drift under the door into the hall. He drove me to distraction, for the furnaces of my brain wouldn't fume without tobacco. Somewhere in these maneuvers, he perceived that I had come to suffer not so much from his presence as from nicotine fits. And he determined then out of his perverse fondness for a prank and out of his kind intention to enlarge my soul to torment me further.

One early-summer afternoon, having moved back into the drawing room, we were pursuing an abstruse argumentative thread, for my part with the strongest sense of how much the hunger for nicotine hampered my speech, when the tutor, noticing my state, suggested that we walk in the garden. What kindness, I thought. He means at last to let me smoke. But he did not. We had no sooner left the terrace and I had no sooner pulled a package of cigarettes from my breast pocket, where I kept them in order to light up the moment I left his door, than he pointed out that we were in the rose garden and that the pleasure for him of being in the rose garden was smelling the roses. He fixed on me his most brilliant smile. It had an angelic luster, I thought, like the smile of Satan after he had conceived the idea of sin, but before he had been hurled from heaven.

I have rarely suffered such defeat. And the only consolation I take is that once during a musical tea party in that unviolated drawing room, I managed to smoke half a Woodbine. I couldn't have done it without the help of two other persons. The first was the musician, an undergraduate who sang American folk songs to the accompaniment of a guitar. It was a new experience for most of the English, especially for the tutor's mother and for her companion, a stout, prim, middle-aged lady, who declared, after listening to a spirited rendering of *Casey Jones,* that she "had never heard anything like it." Nor were the songs to the liking of the tutor's mother. She endured several but then began in a fidgeting way to insist that the singer must be tired, standing there without any support and working himself up so. The undergraduate grew red in the face but continued. After each number came the suggestion that he sit down. The atmosphere was tense, for it seemed that at any moment the obliquely forthright old lady might drive herself into an insult aimed at American music, American life, and Americans present. Under this duress, a tweedy friend of the family, in a far corner, lighted a pipe; and, encouraged by his example, I put a match to a cigarette, which I concealed in the palm of my hand and put out after a few puffs. I wonder sometimes whether the bevy of Italian maids in the house and the old lady did not, after the tea party, descend on that room, fling open the windows, wave cloths, and drive away all scent of tobacco and all echoes of the music.

But I digress. The point I mean to make is the point the tutor seemed to make with his clairvoyant smile. I see his head in my imagination still, detached and nodding, like the nodding head of a rose. And sometimes it is his head and sometimes, the other, as though there were no inerasible distinction in nature between the vegetable and the human and as though by a walk in a garden and an abstinence from tobacco a man might bury his intellect in clustering petals and bring it forth refreshed with dew, bearing the faint red stain of the flower.

Wrong Clothes and Delightful Places

At the end of several years in Cambridge, in spite of such distresses, I had shaken myself out of the American habit of going by car; I had put behind me the intermediate habit of going by bicycle; and I had formed an abiding passion for going by foot. I didn't reach the point of making or buying a walking stick; but I sometimes carried an umbrella, which did as well, although I never learned to flip it round in a circle or throw it out to accompany the movement of my leg. Still I found it useful in pointing out to tourists a patch of Saxon masonry, a Perpendicular detail, an ancient piece of glass in a chapel window. I felt that, held at a certain angle in a clenched fist, it inspired a shade of respect in Cambridge clerks, who were apt to be indifferent. And in embarrassing moments, hooking the handle around the back of the neck, I found, created a diversion.

If I was not adept at the art of the stick, I also failed to acquire the correct dress. The Norfolk jacket, the

thick wool stocking, the heavy shoe, the soft shirt, the limp hat – none of these I thought worth purchasing. When I went out to walk, I just put on what was on top of the pile. I must confess that, stealing along in a tattered trench coat down the Roman road that ran across the fields outside Cambridge and was the popular place for a Sunday afternoon walk, I sometimes felt inferior to the ruddy young men who passed me by with springing step, with the creak of new leather, with the wiry glint of tweed, with the twirl of a stick, with the ringing tone that came from the proper posture and pace and, above all, from the assurance that they were properly fitted out. But I shrugged the feeling off, for if the argument were carried to its end, the only fit garb was a toga.

What I did acquire was an intimacy with the infinitely various places where Cantabrigians, unlike Americans, have an opportunity to walk. In them I came to feel like a hand in a wrinkled glove, like a foot in a soft boot. Some of these – the Backs behind the colleges, the market square, King's Parade, Christ's Pieces – are too commonplace to mention. Walking there, if one means to move about at all, is necessary and not deliberate. Places Cantabrigians seek out are in another class that can be divided into three parts: places inside Cambridge; places and routes lying inside and outside Cambridge; places remote from Cambridge where Cantabrigians settle down in the long vacations to walk and brood and walk and brood, presumably on the tripos exams. An example of each may suffice.

In my experience the south courtyard of the university library is among the most trodden-on spots in Cambridge. It opens off the coffee shop on the ground floor. Its rectangular shape appears to be a result of the architect's ingenuity in preventing theft, for the space is completely enclosed by the wings of the building. If anyone intends to steal a book, he can't escape here but must carry it down one of the twin stairs of the front lobby where the assistant librarians, as suspicious and dour a group as one is apt to meet, can look him over. No one I knew in Cambridge had any success in stealing a book or tried; but I once heard of a legendary thief in the library's modern history, a clergyman from a country parish who, over a period of years, carried off more than three hundred books, concealing them under a large black cloak which he wore for that purpose. At the old gentleman's death, the books were returned by his heirs to the amazement and chagrin of the assistant librarians.

Things are purloined in Cambridge; and if one is aware of the fact and has a tendency to associate impressions in an ill-assorted way, he may, looking up at the high walls of the coffee-shop courtyard, fancy them to be the walls of a prison and may think whimsically about wings. The comparison gathers force from the fact that the sun penetrates here only in a fugitive way and not at all in the middle of the winter. And it gathers force too from the practice of undergraduates and scholars, mad from the activity of their brains and the inactivity of their bodies, who pace the rim of the court as determinedly as they can, faced with the necessity of making a right-angle turn every few hundred feet. And, further, a passing face here and a passing face there may even suggest a criminal type.

But things seen in one light assume a different aspect in another. The world is governed by Proteus of the hurrying heels and the strident horn, who decrees, for the amusement of Poseidon, that appearances shall change. And when the highest mood of the attendant god falls on the courtyard, it comes to resemble not so much an enclosure as a shield. Here what is brightest and best of the intellect may preserve itself from the more chaotic encroachments of nature – may keep the tissue of its labors untorn. And under the god's capricious wand, what is brightest and best may suffuse the clay to which it is attached. There goes the broad compactness in gesture and speech of a Welsh philosopher; there, the massive skull and fathomless eye of a Buddhist priest; there, the wild gaucherie and grace of an Arabian queen.

In a holiday mood Cantabrigians choose places where it is possible to lengthen out their stride for longer intervals in a straight line. Such routes in general take the walker both inside and outside the city. A jaunt along the river is common – to one of the weirs or to a lock on the north side, where one may time his arrival to coincide with that of the excursion steamer to Ely. International congresses – Oriental, philosophical, historical – which meet in Cambridge in the summer, are fond of such outings by boat; and they provide a small drama passing through the lock. The steamer comes from a bend, its hull low in the water, its squat outlines made into firework by the silhouettes of scholars protruding into the air from the upper deck and jutting over the rails. The channel narrows to the lock. Orientalists leap to the ground so that the keel can clear the bottom. For a moment in this remote corner of the green and pleasant land, there is a confusion of Eastern tongues, a tugging at shawls, a wagging of bearded and skull-capped heads.

Common, too, is a walk to a nearby village, to Grantchester for tea and honey, a fashion established by Rupert Brooke. Or to Trumpington to view in the floor of the parish church the brass effigy of Sir Roger de Trumpington, whose crossed, mail-encased legs signify that he was a crusader.

Although places of this kind take the Cantabrigian a few miles from Cambridge, it remains for walks in the long vacation to take him far afield. Some hike from Land's End to John O'Groats. Others measure off the downs and heaths of several counties, but the majority settle for spots that can be covered in a leisurely fashion from a fixed base. For these the Lake District is ideal.

The base I found was an old munitions factory next to Elterwater, which, about the turn of the century,

blew up. Some years later a philosophical innkeeper, a lover of silence and solitude, put some of the roofs back, leaving other walls to stand as reminders of the decays of time, partitioned off bedrooms, a dining room, and a lounge, and led the clear mill stream over weirs and low, rock-bedded falls into various fish-filled channels and fern-brushed pools. Surveying his labor and finding it good, as indeed it was, he decreed that no radio should ever disturb the quiet of the scene. Because of this last feature, especially, a very discreet clientele has been building itself up over the years by sparing word of mouth.

From this center I explored most of the reaches sacred to the real and latter-day Romantics. I rowed on and swam in Derwent Water. I was pinned to a shop wall in Ambleside by a mob of migrant sheep. I went dutifully around Dove Cottage, sat in Wordsworth's bower in the garden. I studied the beams of Grasmere church and outside on the tombstones traced the names of poets. I trod the alleys of Hawkshead where Wordsworth trod and stood at a desk that may have been his in the Hawkshead grammar school. Why I did these things I don't know, for I never believed that I should catch his image here. These were places to walk to, and the going often turned out to be more important than the arrival.

And the going, as elsewhere, provided both pleasure and pain, one difference being that the pleasures were unique. There are no insects to speak of in England — people don't feel a need for screens — but the woolly backs of sheep grazing on the Westmoreland slopes breed flies that transfer themselves readily to anyone passing through a field. Born and nurtured in wool, they instinctively land on and burrow in your hair, so unusual a sensation that it can make a man break into a run, up or down, just to find an altitude at which the flies' lungs fail. In this way I ran right over Loughrigg Fell. Still the view from the top was incomparable. Maps of the region were charted years ago, and a footpath marked there may have become a wood in which to wander, a marsh to slog through. Yet in such spiraling routes, I came upon silent farm houses, hewn of red stone, hidden in hollows — like blood-stained tumuli where the mountains reeled. In the evenings, taking a signal from the silence that broods like thunder on the peaks, the slugs move — soft, black bodies, crowded close. They can induce sheer panic, but the mind may be haunted long after by the horned heads that seem to nod to toneless bells through forests of foxglove toward some uncanny sea.

DREAM

out of the steamy stupor of the room
drunk with the fume of flesh
the dream grew
on the warm humped rafters
blazed from the saint unseen in shadowed frame
glittered on red-lit window panes.
the walls
spun round
turned upside down

the heart
snuggled in
soft bliss
while down the flue
stars rained
till all the hearth was silver-stained

the snoring louts that night
were open-mouthed
in wonder at the sight.

ANTONI GRONOWICZ

One of Our Boys

By Robley C. Wilson, Jr.
Instructor in Foreign Languages
Valparaiso University

THE POLITICIANS ARE using the phrase "our boys" again, and I shudder. Everything is packed into those words, like handfuls of snow into a snowball – regret, and pity, and pain, and pride – and, underneath that, the hard, hidden rock in the center, the stunner of the word "war." Today, and with two sons of my own, I understand what that kind of language says. I didn't always understand.

Nineteen years ago, for example, when I was a child, the walls of my bedroom looked like the inside of a recruiting office. On one wall was an enormous National Geographic map of Europe, with black and red pins deployed on it for the armies of Germany and Russia. Nearby I had tacked up a full-sheet color photograph of Douglas MacArthur, from the Sunday pages of the Boston *Post*. All around the room, high up near the ceiling, I had arranged fifteen or twenty colored pictures of American and British warplanes, clipped from a magazine called *Air Trails*. And in the closets where I kept my toys were regiments of lead soldiers, squadrons of wooden airplanes, and cast-iron armadas of every imaginable class of naval vessel. That was my romantic time. It was a pleasure to watch the swastikas and rising suns proliferating over the A.P. newsmaps in all the papers – a pleasure because I (and Righteousness and Democracy) was only biding my time, letting the enemy eat to the last slender half-inch of the maps, before I wheeled savagely and made him spit it all back. "Our boys," then, meant me – and all the neighborhod kids I played at war with – and the long, tall daydreams that took me off to sleep at night cast each of us in the parts of generals, cocky at the points of our armies, and admirals, faultless on the bridges of our flagships. But ten years later – then was the time when the romantic and the real crossed paths in front of me, when I was at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, waiting to be shipped to Germany.

In 1952 nothing was like my old, fond dreams. I was only a two-striper; there was no real war in Europe (though Korea was on, and I hoped the worst); we were no vast army, but only a respectable dribble of replacements. Nothing was like the dreams, but it was a beginning. That was the time when "our boys" meant me, really, and a few friends, really, and one eighteen-year-old private named Don Bradley.

Waiting at Kilmer was an exercise in patience, for the military has a talent for making waste and monotony into a way of life as correct and formal as if it ought to be a way of life. As a barracks unit, as a lawn-mowing detail; in ragged lines, in neat formations; in card games, in bull sessions; at attention, at ease – we simply waited.

Each morning's muster presented the only stimulus to the lone man: either one avoided duty for the day, or one didn't. Muster was held, after breakfast, in a great grassless meadow. We were hundreds of men learning how great was our capacity for waiting – rank on rank, file on file, army and air force enlisted men standing at rest while an officer read at us from a wooden platform. First we heard the names of the men ready to be shipped, envying them as they dropped out and jogged off to collect their gear. Then we listened to the miscellaneous announcements. Finally we were arrived at the reading of duty assignments – numbers of men needed – while a sunburned NCO went about the business of selecting the men to fill the rosters.

His selections were random. Sometimes he chose by files, sometimes by ranks; sometimes he picked consecutive rows, sometimes he skipped. It was no system to be analysed, only to be guessed. Every man was on his own, and the olive mass of fatigue uniforms in the meadow became a shifting, sliding sea of individuals playing the shirker's game. We stepped back, stepped ahead, sidestepped – into any one of the gaps left by those who had been alerted for shipment. The object was to stay one move ahead of the duty sergeant; sometimes we outguessed ourselves and walked squarely into his web. It was a pitiful exercise in tactics; it was our war games.

No detail was ever difficult, of course. We policed the barracks areas, trimmed the colonel's hedges, counted linens (sheets and pillowcases in an army never wear out from being slept on, only from being counted in supply rooms), emptied trash baskets, and once – once I outguessed myself onto the prison detail.

Prison detail was glorious, and only three of us were chosen for it that day. We put on the class B uniform, with garrison cap, and reported to the stockade, a sprawling yellow structure behind a high, wire fence. There we separated, and I will never know if my two comrades had for themselves so fine a day as I had. I was given an armband designating me as a military policeman. I was issued a carbine. I was even allowed a clip that held three rounds of live ammunition.

Live ammunition may not mean much to an infantryman, but I was a corporal in the air force. I had spent weeks in basic training, marching up and down narrow streets with an empty carbine on my shoulder. I had

spent days falling in a field of crushed rock onto my knees and elbows, holding an empty carbine in my hands. I had spent hours being taught to take the carbine apart and put it back together again. I came to love the stubby little carbine, .30-cal., M-1; it was my weapon, and if war ever visited me the carbine was to save my life.

All that devotion was in order. I had responded to my training like a model recruit. Yet, at the end of it all, I had fired my weapon exactly fifty times, and I had done it on a range, under someone else's rules. I had borne the humiliation of collecting my ammunition five rounds at a time, as if I could not be trusted with more, and threatened with court-martial if I tried to steal a single cartridge. I had done my firing with a non-commissioned officer at my ear, mumbling me advice, trifling with the position of my elbows. I had submitted to the long-winded ritual of the firing range, starting from "Ball ammunition, lock and load," and temporizing its way to "Commence firing." Then I had ten seconds to squeeze off my precious five rounds and begin the whole ceremony over again. Ten tiny seconds to indulge the freedom of shooting my carbine.

So the prison detail was a glorious event.

I was even given a real prisoner to escort across the camp to a dreary clapboard building where his court martial was to be convened. I was instructed to follow the prisoner with my carbine at the ready. I was authorized, if he tried to escape, to order his halt, then to fire a shot over his head, and then to shoot at the fleeing prisoner himself, low and in the legs if possible. The responsibility was so wonderful, I was almost dizzy with it.

My prisoner was named Don Bradley. He was a slight, crew-cut youngster with a little, squirrely face, and he wore, every time I looked at him, a quite innocent smile. Two days earlier he had got drunk in the barracks, walloped an old army tech sergeant behind the ear with a bottle, and cursed the MP officer who eventually came to arrest him. It was a slight enough crime, and from the few words we exchanged he seemed really not a bad kid. If he had known how my mind was rebuilding him, he might never have smiled.

We set out, Bradley walking a few feet ahead of me with his arms loose at his sides, setting the pace, knowing where he was going. I came after, walking pompously, the butt of the carbine poised against my hip, (I couldn't decide whether the butt should ride just above or just below the sharp edge of the pelvic bone, so the poise was a wavering one), terribly conscious of myself, my mission, and the armband I wore. Before we had gone fifty paces I had entirely transformed the boy, picturing him with a low, sloping brow, yellow teeth, cruel eyes — a real delinquent whose parole officer had given him a choice between joining up or going back to reform school. Worse (better) than that, I had rehearsed my response if Bradley should try to escape, and I had it meticulously worked out so that the instant he made his break I would simultaneously drop to one knee, cry "Halt!" and fire the shot in the air. The next moment I would have him in my sights and bring him down, cleanly, with a bullet in the back of the neck. Finally, I would slip the third cartridge out of the clip and hide it in my shoe. My imagined explanation to the investigating authorities indicated that I had fired, generously, two warning shots, and I honestly had meant to hit him low.

For the mile I escorted Bradley, my mind danced through this performance a hundred times, and I heartily wished for him to make his lunge toward liberty. He didn't; I considered shooting him anyway, but fought it. We both arrived unscathed at the judge advocate's office, and twenty minutes later, when we started back to the stockade, I felt my blood-lust boil up once more, and once more not boil over. I didn't hear Bradley's sentence, but the military code, I knew, dealt severely with indecorum and disrespect, and I could expect that his punishment was adequate, even though it was not for me to impose it. I could at least pretend that it was my superior soldier's discipline which had earned me temporary control over a man's life. What I salvaged from my errand was that feeling of pride, a sense that I had finally done something genuinely military, and a nearness to the conditions and tools of war that was never again permitted me in the four years of my service.

It was not long before my name turned up at the muster formation, and less than a month later I was in Bremerhaven, at the army staging area, awaiting final assignment in southern Germany. It was October, cold and bone-damp, with horizontal blades of rain hacking at the old airplane hangars and the neat brick barracks buildings. I had escaped to the service club, and one of the hostesses had sat down to join me in a game of cribbage. I happened to be facing the entrance, and all at once I caught a glimpse of that little, squirrely face wearing its innocent smile.

Bradley saw me at once. He came grinning over to shake my hand, and the hostess, assuming we were long-lost friends, moved away to let us talk. It turned out that it was not the parole officer, but the courts martial board that had given Bradley his choice — sixty days in the Kilmer stockade, with forfeitures, or immediate assignment to Berlin.

I remember my dignity was staggered, and all the other abstract salvages of my childhood took a severe lacing. At the time I wished I had put that ball into the back of his neck after all, but I see now how I had a clear, sharp vision in that moment of several things that have to be understood about our boys, in our armies.

This Academic Jargon

By Herbert H. Umbach
Professor of English
Valparaiso University

RECENTLY IN THE *Washington University Alumni News* a prominent alumnus criticized, among the weaknesses of college teaching, this matter:

> One of my memories of my first month at college concerns an English teacher who told us to look up the word connote in the dictionary. I forgot. So did most of the others in the class, as the teacher learned when she asked us to define *connote* in writing. She became angry and gave us a lecture on the importance of following instructions. Why did she not address herself to the problem of why we were all such strangers to dictionaries and to curiosity? Why did she not give us a lecture on why nobody can hope to make himself understood in this complicated and fascinating world unless he knows the meaning of words like *connote?* And here I come to another improvement I think could be made in college teaching. As it is now and always has been, most professors teach subjects; they do not teach students.

Well, as Mark Twain once observed, the difference between the right and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug! Part of the equipment needed by the able instructor is within easy reach — certainly as a challenge. Clear and simple English ought not to prove difficult of accomplishment if the speaker or writer has an accurate conception of the idea or topic under discussion. Take scholarly writing, for instance. In his provocative book *Introduction to Research,* Tyrus Hillway comments appropriately,

> Long words, unusual words, and, in particular, vague words hamper an understanding of any paper. While special technical terms may be necessary to convey certain meanings in a few academic fields, they frequently turn out, upon mature consideration, to be much less vital than one might suppose, even in the most involved scholarly paper. One is tempted when reading some papers to conclude that a great many technical words and phrases are pure affectation and that the same ideas could have been expressed more directly and more forcefully with simpler language. . . . Difficult and specially invented words do not reveal the profundity of the scholar's thought as much as they reveal the barrenness of his ideas.

We poke fun at newspapermen, actors, physicians, lawyers, preachers, psychologists, and the like for their disguise-verbiage. Especially is the politicians' gobbledegook our target. Samples: "My answer is a definite and final No" means that for the present I'm against it; or, "Yes, absolutely yes" means that if the pressure doesn't get too great, I'm with you. But are we educators, scholars, writers any better in our bafflegab?

There is the story about an author of note who needed money and accordingly wired his publisher: "How much advance will you give for a novel of 60,000 words?" Came the reply: "How big are the words?" How many classroom lectures and how many articles or books would be improved by condensing thoughtfully? We delight in developing jargon for every intellectual discipline, so that already the first sentences reveal what "school" the author comes from. Academic words are chosen (or do they merely pop out?) with paralysis in their muscles and leukemia in their blood; and the mimeograph machine enables every bore to spread his dullness across the earth. Robert Burns was right in raising the question,

> What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
> Your Latin names for horns an' stools . . .?

In particular, classrooms are notorious places where the educational experts have developed a speech that is fit for no habitation other than a cemetery. Too frequently a man or woman established in some theoretical ivory tower (myself included) appears doomed to talk and write like a walking robot or ghost. Instead, should we not remember that it is in the home, the marketplace, the shop, the ballpark, where language is really alive — and then use the best of it? Every teacher and writer needs the real speech of all kinds of real people in every conceivable kind of real situation. It may be that one of our generation's crimes is this debasing of meaning, about which abusage our Lord once said to the Pharisees: "I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12, 36).

On the humorous side, here is a Pedaguese Glossary for us to consider:

To activate: to make carbon copies and add more names to the memo.

Utilization: the thing is finespun theory, but I can't make it work.

Conference: where conversation is substituted for the dreariness of labor and the loneliness of real thought.

Negotiate: to seek a meeting of minds without knocking together of heads.

Expedite: to confound confusion with commotion.

Add your own further illustrations, and you will find it difficult to restrain a self-examination.

After I had begun this essay, a colleague with whom I had discussed it showed me "The Well of English, Now Defiled," a helpful analysis of this same problem. Listen to an expert, Professor Willard Thorp:

> I come finally to the chief defiler of undergraduate writing. And I regret to say we professors are certainly the culprits. And what we are doing we do in all innocence and with the most laudable of motives . . . There is one predicament in our present kind of collegiate education which, I am convinced, confuses the student who desires to write good English, which may, indeed, lead him to believe that there is no necessity for trying to write in the great tradition of English prose. What I am referring to is the tremendous specialization which the subjects in our curriculum have undergone in this century. Because the fields of learning now share very little common ground, they (and we) no longer possess a common language. The historian cannot understand the equations of the physicist and the physicist cannot understand the new vocabulary developed by the sociologist. The professor of literature who lectures about "levels of meaning," the "texture and tension of poetry," the wonderful "ambiguities" in Melville's prose, and the "personal symbolism" in the poetry of Robert Frost, opens the eyes but not the ears of his colleague in chemistry who had no idea literature was *that* difficult. This impenetrability of our particular subjects to the uninitiated does not worry us — as professors — to any great extent. We go our separate ways, happy in our isolation. We rejoice in our own jargon. . . . But I have begun to notice lately that our better students take an unholy pride in the specialized vocabularies they encounter as they move through their academic day.

These pupils become tomorrow's teachers and writers. Are we actually giving them a technique of clear writing, or are we encouraging them to speak and write to *im*press instead of *ex*press?

One proof that valid brevity is a genuine benefit is shown in a practice I have seen at work in The Folger Shakespeare Library, a principle worth incorporating in the explanatory procedure of college and university life. Recognizing that a multitude of high-flown words does not insure wisdom, this great library in its research conferences invites speakers to discuss one of the principal topics informally from prepared notes and to confine their remarks to a maximum of fifteen minutes. Speakers from the floor confine themselves to commentary lasting not more than ten minutes. The moderator as time-keeper ruthlessly enforces the time limit. At first a few professors refused to believe that they could condense significant comment on their subjects into brief essence, but by elimination of jargon they discovered a wholesome truth: a short talk is more effective than a long discourse. Time was available for a lively discussion, and the audience went away stimulated instead of weary.

Still better, might not scholarly essays which now are published *in extenso* in the learned journals become more effective if their authors drastically reduced their length? The life blood of a master spirit might be a little redder if less diluted with verbiage. With us educators, unfortunately, prolixity through jargon has become an occupational disease that manifests itself in windy expositions printed in many an unread journal. Are the great disciplines of mind and spirit in danger of suffocation in a cloud-blanket of useless words?

BEGOTTEN TO A LIVELY HOPE

Deep hope, I cannot place where you begin.
Somewhere within life's spiral maze,
her narrowing and never-ending ring,
your cradle lies.
I half suspect that could I fix upon your source
I would detect my own nativity,
unravel life's obscure charade.
Two thousand years between
I trace St. Peter's way
back to that grave I sealed.
Glad mystery! — this empty cave —
in which I find myself revealed and solved.
Now cut the world in half!
And stretch God's promise
to the earth's elliptic edge! —
Fit stage on which my lively Hope can dance!

JEANNE NUECHTERLEIN

The Theatre

Critics, Their Successes and Flops

By Walter Sorell
Drama Editor

A PRODUCER RECENTLY bought space of a quarter page in The New York *Times* for the following announcement:

> We, Saint Subber, Hugh Wheeler and Jose Quintero are withdrawing our play "Look: We've Come Through" tomorrow evening. We wish to thank those critics and audiences who feel that this production has value. We believed and still believe in what we are presenting at the Hudson Theatre. It is possible that we are right.
>
> P.S. We have nothing but admiration and love for our young cast.

Last season Hugh Wheeler proved with his "Big Fish, Little Fish" that his playwriting has atmosphere, the genuine heartbeat of poetry, and the power of characterization, but that he chooses subjects which are a bit off-the-commercial-path. Moreover, they are plays with quite a few flaws, but with a fresh point of view, with integrity and something to say. They usually flop because they lack the appealing veneer of seeming smoothness.

Hugh Wheeler's new play is such a play. It is about young people and the impotence of life under which they suffer. Its two leading characters, a girl with glasses symbolizing intellect and emotional difficulties and a boy with homosexual leanings, reach out for each other in a hesitant way, like two outcasts. But beneath crippling shortcomings they find kinship and an understanding which the world in its coldness and bluntness denies them.

The writing is sensitive, done with the eyes and ears of a poetic soul. Many scenes are original, many lines have the glow of unexpectedness. But Broadway has no place for such plays. Perhaps we are so full of anxiety, so much occupied with fallout and bombs, with the tragedy of our guilt that we can take little interest in the minute, in the really human, briefly in our case, in the fragile development of two human beings who, in their insignificance, cry out that God has forsaken them.

Another such cry was heard on Broadway for a few days, but the critics' lack of understanding and the sheepish indolence of the public stifled this cry. It came from Karl Wittlinger's two-character tragedy, "Do You Know the Milky Way?" written in a light, comic, almost cabaret-like style. It has gone over most European stages successfully, but failed here.

It takes place in an insane asylum in which a psychiatrist (a former actor) faces a patient who delivers milk. This patient is the picture image of the German "Hans-Guck-in-die-Luft," the simple, good-hearted, dreamy type of German, one who certainly exists and if for no other reason than to cover up for his *Doppelganger* with a Bismarckian or Nazi mentality. The story tells of a soldier who, ten years after the war, after Russian captivity and some involvement in one of the many little wars and massacres in the Far East, escapes with papers taken from a dead soldier. He returns to his home town to find his name on the war memorial, his father dead, his cabbage stolen, his house gone. He is refused recognition. For the living world he is dead and therefore must go on living under the name of the other soldier who, as it turns out, had a criminal record. Our soldier realizes the tremendous guilt there is in all of us and wants to atone for it while being another name and his own self. The theme of this play revolves around innocence, guilt, and our responsibilities as human beings. In essence, here is man seeking his identity.

It is a tragic play written with "Galgenhumor," that acid wit of someone who had once felt the noose around his neck or was amidst the rain of bullets. It has a strong message which, however, is somewhat handicapped by a complicated structure. It is a play within a play. In cabaret fashion, the audience is drawn into the play as inmates of an insane asylum. Prologue and epilogue of this parable extend its symbolism, but as framework do not tighten its structure. The addition of songs in a Brechtian manner without the Brechtian epic form and purpose emphasizes more strongly the light vein. The introduction of a movie sequence, in itself highly dramatic and psychologically interesting, is reminiscent of Erwin Piscator's stage conceptions. But dramaturgically it comes at the point of the denouement when we can hardly wait to see how the soldier acting out his life will come out of this therapy. Piscator used films in the theatre as prologue or in transitions. Here at the end the film insert jars, throws us off balance.

In acting out the climactic stations of his life we are made to believe that the soldier is cured or at least as sane as we all are and that the psychiatrist is at least as sick as the patient was. He must appear in thirteen different roles, a virtuoso part, which adds to the impression of a variete act. It may make the serious intent more palpable, but creates the wrong kind of interest: How fast will George Vescovec (who plays this part with terrific gusto) be able to change? Hal Holbrook, by the way, is the perfect image of the innocent man whipped by life's woeful winds.

Some Thoughts for the Feast of Saint Thomas

By John Strietelmeier
Managing Editor

But one of the Twelve, Thomas (called the Twin) was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples kept on telling him, "We have seen the Lord," but he replied, "Unless I see in His own hands the mark of the nails, and put my finger into the nail-marks and my hand into His side, I will never believe."

Just over a week later, the disciples were indoors again and Thomas with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood in the middle of the group and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, — look, here are my hands. Take your hand and put it in My side. You must not doubt, but believe."

"My Lord and my God!" replied Thomas.

— Saint John 20: 24-28 (Phillips Translation)

SOMEONE — OBVIOUSLY not a Christian — has said that no one should find it difficult to be a Christian at Christmas time. Many a Christian, on the other hand, would say that the very opposite is the case, that nothing in his faith troubles and baffles him so much as the mystery of the Incarnation. "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do," and the anger which flames within me against the evil which possesses me enables me to understand, if only very dimly, something of the wrath of God as it exhibits itself in the awful events on Calvary. The immensity of the universe and the tremendous explosive potential of the atomic nucleus testify to a Maker of all things, visible and invisible, and thus help me to understand something of the quickening power of God as it exhibits itself in the quaking moment of the Resurrection. But nothing within me or outside me prepares me for the exhibition of the love of God which dazzles my eyes at Christmas time when I see God Himself lying, a red and puckery and squirming infant, in a manger in Bethlehem of Judea.

Perhaps because the Christmas story is so unbelievable, so incomprehensible, God Who knows our weaknesses has gone out of His way to make it easier for us to believe it. The telling of the story itself He commits to Saint Luke the Evangelist, of all the Gospel writers the most skillful at narrative writing. So great is Saint Luke's story, simply as literature, that even if there were not a word of truth in it, it would still rank as one of the world's greatest literary productions. And then for those of us who are English-speaking members of the family of God He has reserved another great blessing, for we have the masterful account of Saint Luke translated into the stately language of the Elizabethan Age when men had a reverence and appreciation of language which their descendants have long since lost.

But such blessings as these are always two-edged. The very goodness of God in giving us the record of His Son's birth in winsome language which makes it easy for us to accept in a sentimental way the account of the Incarnation may prove our undoing if we do not, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of God, look behind the majestic words to the real events which they seek to convey to us. What was it, actually, that happened on that first Christmas night? How would the story sound if it were written by one of us as an account of something that happened last night in our own town?

Before we try to write the account itself, we would first of all have to suppose that we, like the people of Judea on that first Christmas night, were living under enemy occupation. We might suppose that our country had been occupied for many years by, let us say, the Japanese — a people alien to us in religion, in political philosophy, in language, in morality. We would next have to suppose that we had only the Old Testament Scriptures — full, as we know, of prophecies of the coming of a Messiah, but unclear to us because we would be unable to recognize most of the prophecies as prophecies. And then we would have to suppose that our best and wisest pastors and theologians had come to believe that the Messiah would be some great leader who would restore our national independence and the free institutions of our past.

Now, supposing all of that, this would be the story:

Last night, in one of the boarding houses down by the tracks, a child was born. The child's parents are a laboring man and his wife (?), recently arrived from down South. Out on the toll road, some truck drivers sitting around a filling station claim that they saw a vision of angels who told them to go and see this child.

That is the story. What are you going to believe about this child? Could he be the very living God from heaven? Go and look at him. He looks and feels and sounds like any other baby you have ever seen. He cries when he is hungry, he burps after he has been fed, he dirties his diaper. This is God?

But perhaps his mother tells you how an angel had appeared to her and told her that she would conceive and bear this child, not as the son of her husband but by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. That is quite a story, isn't it? Perhaps you wonder whether her husband believes it. Of course, he never had Biology 52, so maybe he does.

But what about those truck-drivers and their vision of angels? Well, after all, truck drivers are truck drivers. Nobody in the religion department saw any

angels, nor did any member of the local Ministerial Association, nor did any of us. Who knows? Maybe these truck drivers had been drinking. Or maybe it was just some sort of atmospheric phenomenon, like flying saucers, to which an untrained and superstitious mind gives some sort of supernatural interpretation.

Anyway, here it is the morning after and nothing is changed. The Japanese colonel is still in charge down at the Court House, our worship in church and chapel goes on as before. Unfortunately, the wild rumors about the child upset the occupation authorities who proceed to liquidate all the infants in the community. Meanwhile, the child around whom all the rumors had developed simply disappears.

And so — what? A story which you and I would almost certainly refuse to take seriously if it were told abroad about some child in our own community becomes a basic article of our Faith when it is told in antique language about a child born in similar circumstances in a far-away village two thousand years ago. Do time and distance and exalted language make it any more plausible? Or was it not just as improbable then as it would be now?

There is something closer to Christian in the Doubting Thomases of our day who rather wistfully write the whole Christmas story off as a fairy tale too good to be true than there is in the cocksure nominal Christian to whom it never occured to doubt that God would do anything to assure Himself of good company in eternity. And for the honest doubter, there is proof — not perhaps all the proof he could ask, but all that God could give — that the Child in the manger is indeed Immanuel, "God with us." For some thirty-three years later this Child, having been crucified and buried in a sealed tomb, stands visibly among the little band who had followed Him and says, "Peace be unto you." And in the conviction that they had truly seen him, these men went out to turn the world upside down, ultimately sealing their testimony with death. It is the Christ of Easter Whom we worship at the manger, the living Lord of the Church Whom we see beneath the swaddling clothes. Not language, but the nail-pierced, wounded reality behind the language draws us to the remembrance of His birth. And the witness which convinces us is not so much the *Gloria* of the angel choir as it is the awe-stricken "My Lord and my God" of the no longer doubtful Thomas.

On Second Thought

BY ROBERT J. HOYER

THERE ARE FEW things more difficult than accepting the forgiving love of God. It is so terribly humbling a thing.

Bring a small kindergarten child into your church service, and let him give the message of the love of God. You do it every Christmas. He will then say his little piece in stilted verse, swaying from side to side, And all the adults in the audience will smile fondly. We approve of this little child. His message is good, considering who he is.

That's what my Lord is like. He smiles at me and my effort as I preach. He smiles fondly while I sit here and write. My message is good, considering who I am. It's not good in itself, of course — hardly anyone can understand me. It's good only because He loves me, and He accepts my little piece.

My Lord smiles not only at me, but at my son, and at my pastor, and at Tillich and Barth. He smiled in forgiving, accepting love at Dr. Luther. We go our simple little ways on God's good earth. We stand up to say our little piece before His people. Some of us have even convinced ourselves that we are great orators and that we know the truth. Well, our God is a God of steadfast love, and in fond forgiving hope He accepts what we have to offer. He calls it good, considering what we are.

If that little child in church is inclined to sulk, or rebel, or fight, we correct him in the hope that he will some day learn. We have no battle with him — he is not our equal. He is only a little child, and we are adults! Just so God forgivingly corrects me when I battle with someone else. He forgives those who attack me. He urges me on when I sulk. He has no battle with me — I am not His equal. For I am but a little child, and He is God.

Think of this, next time you get up to speak. Next time you give your gift to the church, next time you are called on to work for the kingdom. Is it hard to take? We're grown men now, we're important and we think deep thoughts? We have to learn to take it. That fond approving smile of God at our best efforts is the meaning of forgiveness! Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. We neither need nor have any source of joy beyond the fact that God likes what we're trying to do.

The MCA Workshop

By WALTER A. HANSEN

IT IS A stimulating experience to take part in the annual meetings of the Music Critics Association. One sees and chats with friends of long standing, and one never fails to make new acquaintances and to mull over widely divergent views on music and musicians.

These workshops, as they are called, invariably reinforce my own conviction that the tonal art thrives on differences of opinion.

The critics in attendance submit anonymous reviews of the concerts at which they are guests. These articles are then discussed and dissected with the utmost frankness. Now and then the fur begins to fly with friendly insistence; but only the writer of a particular article knows whose evaluations are being torn to pieces, praised, or merely tolerated. This makes for a free interchange of impressions and conclusions. Any critic who for some strange reason imagines that he or she is omniscient is rapidly disabused of such a preposterous notion.

This year the annual workshop was held in Cincinnati. The critics heard and reviewed two concerts. The first of these two events was devoted to chamber music performed by the La Salle String Quartet; the second was presented by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Max Rudolf.

The string quartet played a composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and a work by Bela Bartok. The orchestral program was made up of Mozart's *Prague Symphony;* William Schuman's radically revised *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra,* with Joseph Fuchs as guest artist; and Sir Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations.*

To me it is especially gratifying to note that Bartok, whose music strikes some listeners as strange and hard to grasp, is accepted and hailed as a master. Will he ever be regarded as a composer worthy of being mentioned in the same breath with Mozart? I think so. But some critics and scores of noncritics do not share my conviction. Bartok continues to make many hackles rise, and one occasionally encounters individuals who seem to consider Mozart a bit out of date.

Since I believe that it is much easier to find fault and to pick flaws here and there than it is to give carefully substantiated praise wherever and whenever one is able to do so, I took great pleasure in the performances presented by the La Salle Quartet. Nevertheless, it was both fascinating and enlightening to listen with keenly inquisitive ears to the opinions and verdicts of reviewers who did not share my reactions in every detail.

Some of the critics considered Mr. Rudolf's reading of Mozart's *Prague Symphony* beyond reproach. I was one of them, even though I know that other conductors equally skillful and learned do not always see eye to eye with Mr. Rudolf in the matter of tempo or with regard to accentuation, co-ordination, and subordination. The world of music would be exceedingly dreary if every able conductor presented the works of Mozart or any great composer in exactly the same way. Just as every masterpiece is autobiographical in more than one respect, so every performance of a masterpiece contains something of the individual who presents it. This is unavoidable. It need not be incompatible with truthfulness. Naturally, a conductor, a player, or a singer must always guard against letting his or her own ego submerge, distort, or eradicate the essential characteristics and the clearly indicated directions of a composer.

Mr. Schuman's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* led to much discussion. I must say in all conscience that I found in it more than I had expected. But one must listen to a work of this kind far more than once in order to be able to give an evaluation concerning which one could have the confidence that it will hold water. No critic in attendance at the workshop had ever heard this composition in its revised version. Consequently, it was exciting to note the widely differing opinions that found their way into the reviews. Mr. Fuchs, who played the frightfully difficult violin part with consummate skill, and Mr. Rudolf, who conducted the performance, undoubtedly knew and still know more about this concerto than any of the critics who attended and reviewed the concert.

Although I do not abhor Elgar's *Enigma Variations,* I could easily mention dozens of works that are infinitely more palatable to me. But this is my own reaction, and it did not prevent me from giving high praise to the reading presented by Mr. Rudolf and the orchestra. Again it was stimulating to hear evaluations by no means in complete conformity with one's own. Even a work like Elgar's *Enigma Variations* is bound to thrive on the clashing of opinions.

Should the government of the United States subsidize the arts? Under the leadershii of Paul Hume the critics assembled in Cincinnati discussed this highly important question rather thoroughly. It seemed to me that nearly everyone was disposed to answer in the affirmative. At all events, I myself am ready and eager to say yes. Are you? The government is spending billions of dollars on armaments. How wonderful it would be if but a small fraction of this money could be used for the support of the arts!

Apostle Stones

By ADALBERT RAPHAEL KRETZMANN

Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself, being the Chief Cornerstone.

Ephesians II:20

†

The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation XXI:14

†

God, Which by the preaching of Thine Apostles, didst open to Thy Church the Kingdom of Heaven, and didst call them the Lights of the world, grant, we beseech Thee, that being assisted by their prayers, by whose teaching we are guided, and splendour illuminated, we may make these our actions pleasing to Thy Divine Majesty. Amen.

†

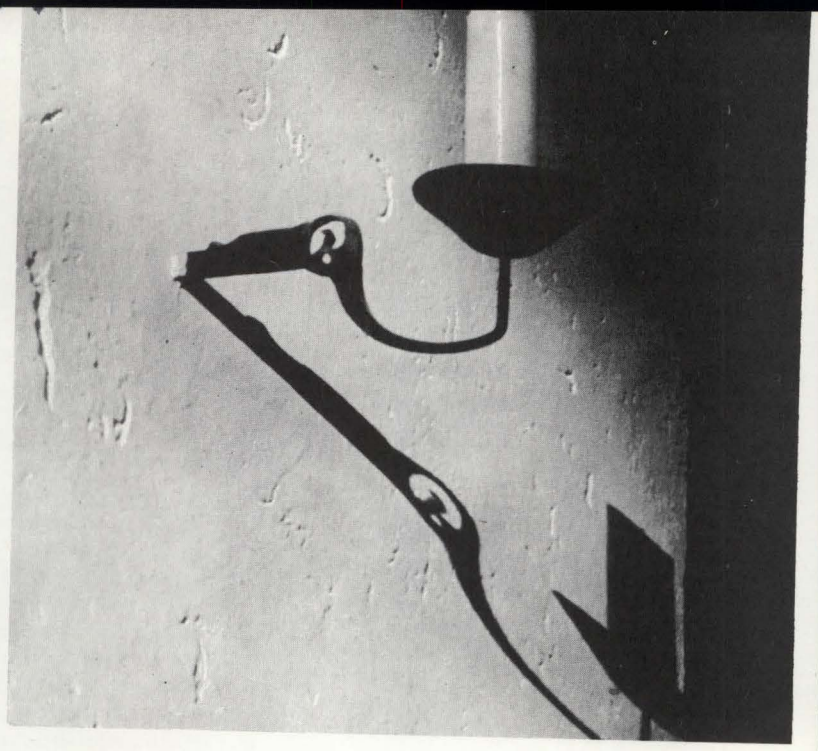
ONE OF THE MOST interesting revivals of old custom and good tradition is the emphasis which is being placed upon the Apostle Stones and the Apostle Lights in the churches of Europe and America. Durandus says (about the year 1286), "Next, when the altar hath been anointed with chrism, the twelve crosses painted on the walls of the church are also anointed. But the Crosses themselves be painted; first, as a terror to evil spirits, that they, having been driven forth thence, may be terrified when they see the sign of the Cross and may not presume to enter therein again; secondly, as a mark of triumph. For Crosses be the Banner of Christ, and the signs of His triumph. Crosses, therefore, are with reason painted there that it may be made manifest that that place hath been subdued to the dominion of Christ.

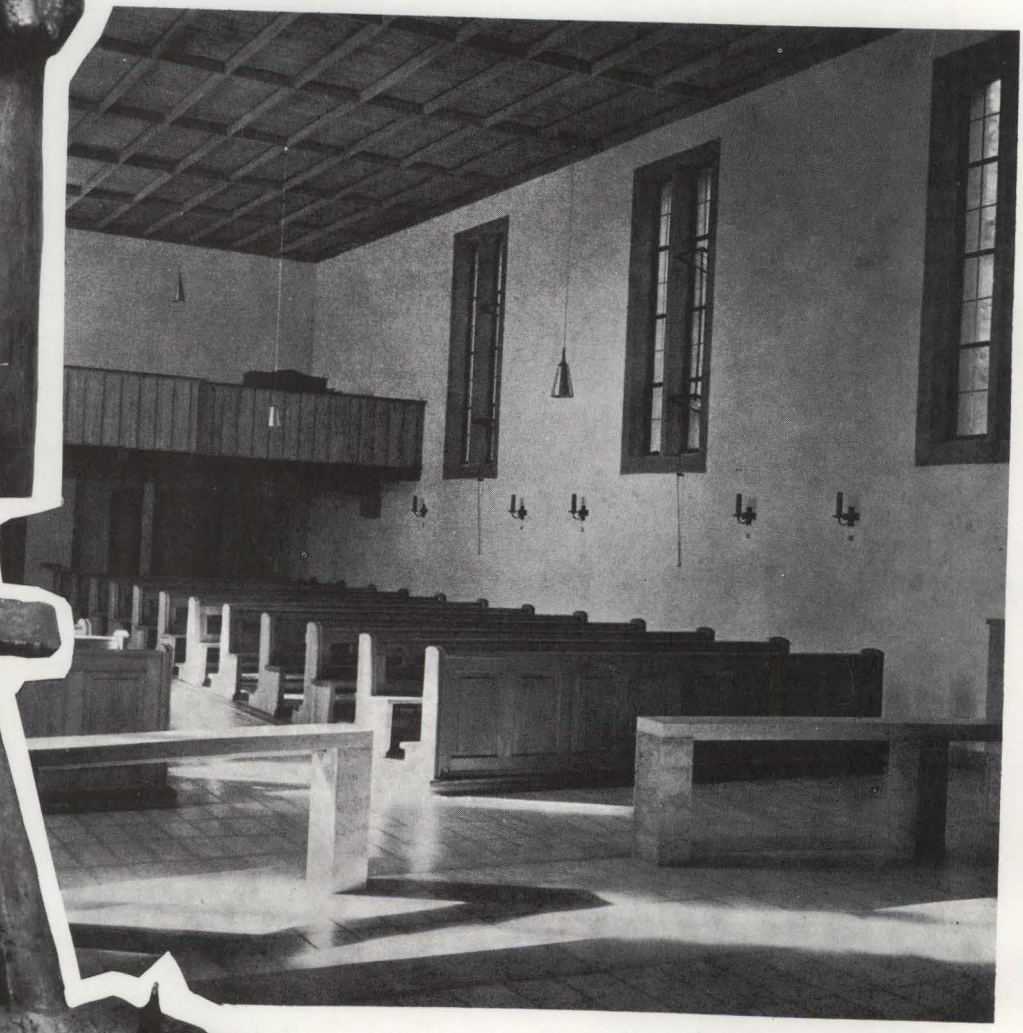
"For even in the pomp of an earthly sovereign, it is customary when any city hath been yielded, for the imperial standard to be set up with it. And to represent the same thing, Jacob is said to have set up the stone, which he had placed under his head, as an historical, traditional, and triumphal monument.

"Thirdly, that such as look on them may call to mind the Passion of Christ by which He hath consecrated His church, and their belief in His Passion . . . The twelve lights placed before these Crosses signify the twelve apostles who have illumined the whole world by the faith of the Crucified, and whose teaching hath dispersed the darkness: whence Bernard saith, all prophecy is verified in the faith of the Crucified One; and the Apostle. 'I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified' (I Corinthians II:2). Wherefore the Crosses on the four walls of the church are lighted up and anointed with chrism, because the Apostles preaching the mystery of the Cross have, by the Faith of Christ, illumined the four quarters of the earth unto knowledge, have lighted them up unto love, have anointed them unto purity of conscience and unto the savor of a good reputation." (Durandus, Chapter 6, of "The Dedication of a Church")

The Apostle Stones and Candles clearly show on the walls of the very simple church done by Rudolf Schwarz, just outside of Cologne. In the upper right and on the left side are seen Apostle Lights of very special quality. The first was done by Karl Knappe in 1950. The second one, with the figure of St. Peter, is one of a complete set of twelve Apostle Candles in the city church of St. Elizabeth in Munich done by Roland Friedericksen in 1957.

Apostle Stones have, fortunately, begun to replace the stations of the cross inside the church (they are now found in private devotional areas, or outside the church proper) and are gaining a place of honor in both the Lutheran and the Roman churches of the continent. The Crosses are either painted as truly significant liturgical signs at the proper places on the church walls, or they are carved into permanent stones, or inlaid in mosaic. These stones (or painted Crosses) have long been the most ancient part of the dedication procession and ritual in the Christian Church, and their significance for the present day can certainly not be over-emphasized. Even the Reformed Churches of Holland and Switzerland show pillars with beautiful Crosses and Apostles paintings as an emphasis on apostolic teaching and confession.





BOOKS OF THE MONTH

RELIGION

ONE LORD, ONE BAPTISM

(World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, Augsburg Publishing House, $1.25)

This paperback book incorporates two documents, one an interim report on the Church under the title, "The Divine Trinity and the Unity of the Church," the second on "The Meaning of Baptism." Both of these were submitted in August, 1960, to the Commission on Faith and Order by the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church (established in 1954). The commission which prepared the documents consists of representatives of a wide range of European and American Churches.

The documents reflect the determination of the Commission to "penetrate behind the divisions of the church on earth to our common faith in one Lord," and yet to take the differences between churches with full seriousness. "Irreconcilable differences are to be recorded as honestly as agreements," is a guiding principle in the constitution of Faith and Order (p. 4). "If the irrenconcilables are to be recorded, they must be detected, defined, debated. The discussion of differences does not mean peace, but, theologically speaking, the sword" (p. 5).

On the other hand, the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, at Lund in 1952, also projected a method. "In our work we have been led to the conviction that . . . the doctrine of the Church must be treated in close relation both to the doctrine of Christ and to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit" (p. 8). Thus the study commission consciously proceeded, not with position papers of various member churches, but with the person and work of Jesus Christ, in order that the positions of churches might then be examined Christologically at the very root of the doctrine.

The resulting study is one in which even the most conservative can find considerable joy and comfort.

The fears we once held, that an ecumenical conversation on terms such as these would be flagrantly unionistic, dishonest, exploiting words and formulae for the sake of pretending a non-existent unity, have been proved untrue. Though we may challenge certain statements or viewpoints, there is no evidence of deliberate or compromising dishonesty.

However the various members of the Commission may define the authority of Scripture as Word of God (and such definition is not called for in this study), it is altogether clear that Scripture is read and accepted and authoritatively cited as the Word of God to man, the only source and norm of the Christian faith.

That the heart and center of Scripture is Jesus Christ is also abundantly clear. The Crucified and Risen Christ is the hub around Whom all else turns. This is a sound hermeneutic, for it prevents dealing with any doctrine or aspect of doctrine in isolation. The Commission confesses, however, that it has not attained unanimity on the meaning of this Christological center, as the "way of salvation." Here there are "apparently still unresolved tensions." "To some its essence is justification by faith and the life in love that follows, to others it centers in the sanctification of life by sacramental grace, and to still others the concept of obedience to the law of Christ is the heart of the matter" (p. 36). Here we can detect the struggle for an adequate definition of the relation of the Christian faith to life.

The documents stand squarely on the Nicene and Chalcedonian confessions for their understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Nor do they yield in the least to modern efforts to by-pass the fundamental historicity of Christ by existential or mythological interpretations. "The foundation of the Church is not an *idea* of God or of incarnation, but the inclusive historical event reaching from the taking of flesh by the eternal Word to the outpouring of the Spirit." (p.17). "The 'ontological' affirmations of the creeds presuppose and include the historical; and the New Testament Christology implies ontology and calls for consideration in ontological terms" (p. 19). "The Church as the body is the body *of Christ* . . . Yet it must never be confounded with Christ. It must never seek to usurp his place or give itself out to be another Christ, but be content to be subordinated to the head as the human community of believers graciously assumed by him into unity with himself" (p. 25).

On the assumption that at least some of the stresses within our own church have at their roots a certain ambiguity in our doctrine of the church and fellowship, we may well read this study with profit and with the real expectation of finding in it a contribution toward our need. The Christological approach to Baptism, tracing its meaning from the baptism of Christ, through His crucifixion and resurrection to Pentecost, and thence to our own baptism, is largely unfamiliar in our circles and provides resources toward a more effective use of this doctrine in our preaching and teaching.

Once we appreciate the depth and sincerity of theological thought that has gone into the preparation of these documents, we cannot but recall Peter's response when the Spirit was poured out on the household of Cornelius: "Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (Acts 10:47) If this is evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in the churches, must we not also raise the question, "Is not there some way in which we can be in on this conversation, with men who have received the Spirit as we have?" If we have further insights to suggest, or questions to raise, it is surely our call to speak.

It seems to this reviewer, for instance, that the concept of the *mystery* in Ephesians (p. 16) is not exploited to its full depth when it is treated from Chapter 3:3 and not rooted in 1:9. Paul's whole point is that everything by which man, Jew or Gentile, may stake a claim on the grace of God is exposed and brought into condemnation, so that grace is revealed to be the radical, wholly self-determined, for-nothingness of God's love. The barriers that are broken down in the cross are precisely the claims by which men assert their superiority over others before God, for it is when men bring God *nothing* that they become one in Christ.

Perhaps a valid question could be raised concerning the definition of faith. In each of the documents (p. 24 and 59), faith is identically defined. "'Faith' here means far more than the explicit affirmation of belief. Faith refers to the entire ordering and opening of the self to Jesus Christ — therefore including hope, love, trust, obedience, humility and belief . . ." This definition is an understandable attempt to make clear the transforming consequences of faith, to protect faith against abuse, to keep faith from being a mere assent to history or doctrine. But does it not also obscure faith and lose contact with its root dynamic? Luther always defined faith in the context of the Word of promise to which it clings. This introduces the question of the *means of grace,* of course, another point at which the commission recognizes an unresolved difficulty (p. 35). Yet it is fascinating that in the treatment of the relation of faith to Baptism, and very shortly after reaffirming its definition as above, faith is suddenly spoken of in decidely "Luther"-an terms. "The faith which is related to baptism is a complex phenomenon, but is chiefly to be defined as response to the redemption *made known in the gospel.* It is the necessary means of *receiving* the salvation offered *in the gospel"* (p. 61-62). Here one suspects that the "complexity" of the phenomenon is due to the cluttered ambiguity of the commission's own prior definition, and to

its unresolved conflict on the means of grace.

A question may be in order also regarding the section on "Christ, the World and the Church" (p. 36ff). The Commission here wants to assert the essential goodness of God's creation, and to affirm the nature of the church's contribution to the hope of its restoration. This is a very difficult subject theologically, and one on which the wrestling is far from over in our own church. Any questions we may ask, we ask sympathetically.

But there are questions. For example, what does the Commission mean, when it says, "The world is under the judgment of God," or "of Christ"? The implication seems to be that there is *hope* for the world in this statement. A dual, schizophrenic hope seems to be offered, e.g. p. 40: "If she (the church) affirms even in this present age a hope for Christ's world because it is still his, she looks forward with yet more confidence and hope to the fulfillment of creation in the new heaven and the new earth . . ." The commission suggests, "God's reconciliation of the world in Christ means the restoration of man, the beginning of the new humanity, and the accomplishment of a new creation upon the groundwork of the old" (p. 34). Perhaps the commentary on this is a later statement, "The Church's proclamation therefore unveils an apocalyptic process" (p. 39). Does this kind of definition not obscure the judgment under which this world stands, veil the wrath of God, and take with less than full seriousness the doctrine of original sin?

The commission speaks of the evil of the world in anthropocentric terms. "A world which has forsaken God is a world deeply ravaged by evil, a world in which the best efforts of man bring evil in their train in which random forces or blind chance seem to work against man and his good. Man himself cannot realize his potentialities; his confidence as the divinely-appointed Lord of earth is sapped by the anxiety and self-hatred that lies near the root of his being; inwardly and socially he is torn by conflict. In his distress he accuses not only himself, but the world around him, and so by implication its creator, against whom he has rebelled. Against this denial of God's creative act, the Church must proclaim the goodness of God's work . . . The world remains God's own creation, the sphere of his glory; man remains even in spite of himself, in the image of God, and he remains the one to whom God gave rule and dominion over the natural order . . ." p. 37).

One is struck by the absence, in this supposedly devasting context, of all reference to the divine wrath, to a judgment of God which condemns and destroys the world and all hopes that men attach to it, and man with his hopes. Does not this lack in the end vitiate and obscure the very Gospel, the very Christ, whom the Commissioners elsewhere are so intent to proclaim? The effect is a social salvation, a reformation of attitudes — but considerably less than the total redemption from a total judgment, which is declared and effected for us in the cross.

This brings us, of course, to the core Lutheran hermeneutic, the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. If churchmen are engaging in serious ecumenical conversation, searching Scripture with all zeal in order to rediscover the roots of their faith, ought we not with equal seriousness and zeal join them in the battle? Not only is there much for us to contribute, there is also much for us to learn. Whatever Bible passages are cited to separate us from such conversations, surely they are misused when they become a barrier which prevents us from magnifying in ecumenical Christianity the merits of Christ.

PAUL G. BRETSCHER

GENERAL

POETRY AND EXPERIENCE

By Archibald MacLeish (Houghton Mifflin, $4.00)

Mr. MacLeish is an honored poet, critic, and teacher. Like some others in his profession, he has long been engaged in trying to explain poetry to a popular audience. This is a good thing; and no matter what he says, it is better than if nothing at all had been said. People who feel that poetry is a kind of magic, or that it is nonsense, will appreciate the MacLeish approach to the intricacies of a difficult art. *Poetry and Experience,* a collection of essays on sounds, signs, images, metaphor, and four specific poets, is worth reading, by everyone.

However, Mr. MacLeish's position in the *experience* of poetry is considerably more valid than his position in the *knowledge* of poetry. That is, he is much too sympathetic to the emotionalism of poetry, and in consequence not merely neglects but negates the worth of reason as a poetic faculty. This argument is allied in many respects to the similar position taken by many people in religion. That is, they say that the most important elements of, for example, Christianity must of necessity be taken on faith, because reason fails to make an intellectual recognition of the proper values.

Indeed, poetry and religion have been equated by several major poets and critics. Wordsworth felt that the poet was an interpreter of the ideal world, just as the priest is the medium between God and man. Mallarme took the poet even higher in the spiritual realm, declaring him to be a high priest. As a result, poetry becomes a divine communication, a revelation in its own right.

This position has much to recommend it, but it also tends to hide the major issue — communication. It can be said without fear of serious debate that all forms of art exist in order to communicate. Perhaps, as in architecture, the communication is of nothing more than a condition, such as function or beauty, which can to a degree be talked about in non-architectural terms. That is, it is possible to translate the function or beauty of a building into verbal terms. A building can be successful *because* it is useful as well as pleasant to look at, and for quite specific reasons. In turn, music and painting can convey states of emotion or paraphrasable meanings which would be difficult to state accurately in other terms but which nevertheless communicate ideas of some kind. There is meaning in music, and there is meaning in painting. Above all, there is meaning in poetry, the most accurate and precise means of communication man has.

MacLeish seems to think otherwise. In one of his most famous poems, "Ars Poetica," he says that "A poem should not mean/ But be." Much of his book is designed to explain that one statement. MacLeish says that a poem is complete in itself and that nothing can be taken from it without destroying the poem. That is, a reader may not paraphrase a poem, may not translate it into any terms other than its own. A poem does not offer a statable meaning; it is itself the meaning. Its value, therefore, is entirely in its mere existence rather than in any reasonable idea which might be lifted from it.

In other words, poetry is a kind of magic. The critic cannot fully explain how it works. MacLeish, like many other critics, settles largely for a discussion of metaphor. Metaphor is essentially a relationship between two things which are normally unrelated. It is true that most art proceeds from this general method in which the artist "discovers" something "new" rather than creates it. He perceives a relationship which has not been noticed before, at least not in this "new" way. Metaphor, however, can be analyzed and evaluated. And so MacLeish goes further. Such meaning as he is willing to admit is found not in the images of the metaphor but in the space between these images. A poet finds it impossible to say what he wishes to, and so he says things on both sides of it and the "meaning" is in the blank space in the middle. Again, this may be in itself a metaphorical way of explaining how poetry works. But it is not very satisfactory. It leaves us feeling that the main part of the poetic process is entirely accidental, and indeed so it is with many poets.

MacLeish wishes, apparently, to leave the problem right there. Over and over, in various ways, he asserts that "This question, obviously, takes me farther than I ought to try to go alone, for it pushes past the gates and doors of the art of poetry to the art itself — to the forbidden place within the art where the Pythio sits above the vapor." Granted that some of the workings of art seem at times to be mysterious. Often we can explain a "discovery" on purely mechanical grounds; at other times we are inclined to attribute it to "inspiration," to "revelation," to, indeed, the intervention of the Holy Spirit. But this concerns the poetic process, not the resulting poem. There is a great deal of difference between the many motives and emotional purposes which lie behind the writing of a poem and the poem itself.

First, there would be no sense in even trying to write a poem unless the attempt were accompanied by a desire to communicate, to organize, to explain. The poet may begin with an emotional experience which is somehow significant to him. He must conclude, however, with something more than the experience itself if it is to be meaningful to anyone else, or even to himself. He must come to terms with his experience, understand it, organize it, and communicate this understanding. It is here that MacLeish does a great deal of damage by insisting only upon the emotionalism of poetry. In this respect he is close to the Imagists, or to the Romantics, or to the Eliot theory of the objective correlative. And, as we all know, an emotional jag is what most people expect to get from a "lovely" poem.

If we look at a sonnet by Shakespeare, or an Elizabethan lyric, or a narrative poem by Tennyson we find that in some degree all good traditional poetry does more than recreate an experience. A good poet *intends* to say something, and if his poem is a good one it will reveal his intentions. When structure is added to the idea, and texture is added to the structure, the intentions are on their way to being realized, or satisfied. If, however, texture (or decoration, as it might be called sometimes) dominates the poem, the result will be "pretty," or "lovely," and largely meaningless. MacLeish and a host of modern poets and critics feel that texture and its emotional stimulation are the core of the poem. MacLeish says that "The poem's meaning is evoked by the structure of words-as-sounds rather than by the structure of words-as-meanings." As though a word could possibly be uttered without its meaning! We have words precisely in order to convey meaning. Words have come to man so that he may express ideas, so that he can do something more than point and grunt. And now (probably since Mallarme) too many poets and critics wish to revert to a semi-primitive system of points and grunts.

MacLeish says that what is present in a poem is *felt*. Things are known by the emotions. Of course this is part of the total process; if we remove the textural emotions from poetry we have taken one step toward prose. But only one step. The final distinction between poetry and prose is nothing more than meter. Prose may have a kind of meter, but it is irregular and is not the chief means of control. Poetry is controlled by meter and by the resulting rhythm. Rhythm is, in a sense, emotional; and so here we have the necessary emotions in a poem. These need not be present in the texture, in the images, in the space between the images.

Poetry, in order to be poetry, must be technically-emotional, but its subject matter may or may not be an aspect of the emotions. It may be an idea, even a perfectly rational idea, which is then stated more precisely and effectively in poetry than in any other form of art. It may, in other words, be a poetry of statement. It may be paraphrasable. It may even be understood. This need not take the magic out of poetry, but it will at least substitute communicable meaning for MacLeish's "odor of meaning." It will take much of the "cuteness" out of poetry and allow the idea to assume its rightful significance. It will force readers to confront poetry, to understand it, rather than get merely an emotional lift from it.

Most churchmen would be unwilling to allow religion to "be" and not "mean." Even an emotional experience can, of course, have some kind of meaning. We need to enlarge the term to "significant meaning." At this point the reason, the intellect, must enter the picture if only to provide evaluation. Man seeks meanings, rationally if possible, otherwise through myth and faith. In either case, his art expresses and attempts to understand his experiences. His art is his record of his understanding. A record is a communication. A communication, to have any validity at all, must have meaning. And so the circle goes. A poem *must* "mean."

At the very least, we have the right to ask modern poets, MacLeish among them, to recognize the fact that to "mean" and to "communicate" is not necessarily to sin, artistically or otherwise.

GOLDEN WALL AND MIRADOR

By Sacheverell Sitwell (World, $7.50)

Although Peru, as seen by Mr. Sitwell, is the major attraction in *Golden Wall,* the tour takes the reader also to Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Yucatan, and briefly to Miami and Havana. This is a tour of fascinating possibilities, and it is a pity that Mr. Sitwell did not take advantage of more than a few of them. His concern with flower gardens, museums, and ruins reveals a traditional and rather stuffy British attitude which has the fault of ignoring human interest, transportation, food, current affairs, and even the members of his own party.

Mr. Sitwell is himself a member of the famous writing family in England which includes Dame Edith and Sir Osbert. As might be expected, his observations are impressionistic, somewhat pedantic, and often abstract. The things he sees are frequently named rather than described. And he uses terms and references which have little meaning for most readers — "villas in the *classical* taste," a description which does not describe. It may be that British readers will fare better. Certainly the prose style is British with its heavy and formal vocabulary and its frequent incomplete sentences, as though Mr. Sitwell thought that repeated exclamations could somehow provide the excitement which the material demanded.

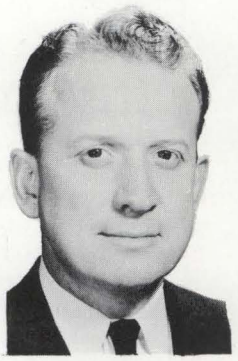
On occasion the material literally carries itself, especially in the high-altitude country (the Altiplano) of Cuzco, Puno, Tiahuanaco, La Paz, and Quito. Here, as Mr. Sitwell reacts to the effects of the altitude, he ceases referring to himself as "one" and becomes a quite personal "I" as he describes his breathlessness and his inability to sleep. Apparently the lightheadedness at 12,000 feet also dulled his esthetic senses and forced him to make more immediate and practical contact with the scene around him. At this point the book is actually as stimulating and rewarding as it might have been throughout.

It may be that Mr. Sitwell lacks the proper language for describing a country that is not only new to him but also brings from him a childish awe which is refreshing at first but is eventually overdone. This is reminiscent of Francis Parkman's faltering attempts to describe the American West in 1846. An observer in this predicament has two alternatives: he may invent new terms, or new uses for old terms; or, he may fall back on allusions to a way of life quite different from that with which he is confronted. Both Parkman and Sitwell fall back.

However, *Golden Wall* is by no means a failure. The interest accumulates through the book, so that by the end we are stirred to get a map and see what this little-known part of the world looks like. Mr. Sitwell arouses the curiosity even though he does not always satisfy it. Probably this is all we can ask of most books. Physically, the book is handsome, well-printed, a pleasure to look at, and sprinkled with many photographs. It is certain to whet the appetite for more information on Peru.

A Minority Report

Politics and Evangelism



By VICTOR F. HOFFMANN

IN *Politics and Evangelism* (Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York), Philippe Maury provides interesting insights into an old and much discussed subject: the relevance of Christianity to the world and specifically to politics.

The problem, according to Maury, appears more acute and even more insoluble in an age during which the Christian Church is so much under fire from many directions: new orthodoxies, new heresies, the questioning of basic assumptions and postulates, the attraction of other religions as foreign cultures are moving to our back doors, the impact of intellectual and technological discoveries on the old ideas and concepts, and so on.

The younger generation — students especially, our budding intellectuals — often feel deeply their helplessness and their hopelessness.

Students, as well as people generally from other walks of life, sometimes go on the defensive in a hurry and with a vengeance. They will take hold of their old perspectives and postures with frustrating anxiety as they sing to themselves: "The old shall not pass away." In no way do they wish to give evidence of accommodations to the inevitable changing world of history. In many instances here and there in the book, Maury clearly feels "it is of no help to cling to a biblical purism."

In doing this, the churches, moreover, "grow more and more interested in themselves and indifferent to the world." Churches more interested in themselves forget that the opposition to the church that comes in persecution, hostility, and indifference is able to confer upon the church "new strength, new vitality, and new effectiveness." By way of contemporary American examples: when ministers are accepted into Rotary, when ministers look upon this membership as an improvement in their status, when membership in a church is considered good propaganda appeal for the politician, and when churches grow by leaps and bounds in membership and finances, that church and that clergy might be sterile and far from the Kingdom of God.

Philippe Maury, on the other hand, speaks from a different context. During World War II and especially during the Nazi occupation of France, he "was compelled to make political choices" in which his "whole life was at stake." As he sees it, these choices were dangerous for him, not only because they were made under the costs and consequences of resistance to a totalitarian regime, but also because his Christian integrity was called into question. The question, then, was not how to resist the totalitarian regime but how to maintain the Christian witness as a part of the resistance.

For Maury withdrawal was out of the question: "There is no ivory tower, sealed off, where a man could really ignore his political existence." If Christians are to give witness of their faith, they are also to give that witness in political action. If Christians are to serve their neighbors, their friends and enemies, they can also give that service in political action.

A key point, understandably enough, in *Politics and Evangelism* is: *"The normal relationship between the church and the world is that of dialogue."* In the light of this key proposition, either withdrawal or neutrality is an illusion.

However, the other polar extreme is also an illusion, "political catholicism." Says Maury: "Whereas pietism repudiates the world and escapes from it, catholicism — I should perhaps speak of political and cultural catholicism — attempts to absorb the world into the church, to accept as Christian its political, moral, and esthetic values." This kind of approach "becomes synonymous with synthesis, syncretism, almost pantheism."

To be sure, there are overly enthusiastic people in this world who feel they can spread the Christian blanket over sociology, political science, philosophy, football, architecture, and politics. Most ridiculous of all appears the attempt to establish a Christian political party. These attempts are based on the assumptions of "optimism about the progress of the world" or on a belief that the world will somehow or another "gradually be transformed into the Kingdom."

Pietism or withdrawal presupposes fears and anxieties about living in this world and in the political universes. Political neutrality suggests that we can maintain an indifference. But how can we be indifferent about a system which collects taxes from us, which fights wars for us, which passes laws that benefit us, etc.?

On the other hand, the Christian is not a romantic sentimentalist who thinks that the world will bow down and kneel every time he cites a Bible passage.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Now and again, within our own circles, one encounters the support of a particular theological position which two decades ago was mentioned among us only by way of rejection (and still is, in The Brief Statement). We have reference to a limitation of the authority of Scripture to matters of "faith and life," as opposed to historical, geographical, and other "secular" matters. The point is made by some that God has given Scripture "for our learning" — "learning about our estrangement from God under the Law and our reconcilation to Him in the cross of Jesus Christ." God's purpose in any part of Scripture "is to answer the one question which man can not work out for himself: 'What must I do to be saved'?" The conclusion is then drawn that when Scripture handles historical matters, e.g., the Creation, the Deluge, the Exodus, the details of the Book of Daniel, *et al.* one is privileged to reject as erroneous what Scripture states, since Scripture allegedly tells us that it doesn't intend for us to learn anything about such matters from its pages anyway.

In the days gone by proponents of this position in other areas of the Church have distinguished in Scripture between God's Word, which is truth and must be taught, and man's word, which may be overlooked. In honest openness they have rejected the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Nowadays in our midst, with less candor, one catches echoes of formulations that speak of a verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture in which *God wills to permit error in fact.* But of course, the assurance comes, only those things in Scripture that have to do with "faith" are binding on the Christian conscience.

From the viewpoint of protestant theological scholarship as we know it, such a formulation is a contradiction in itself. The term "verbal inspiration" in itself carries the concept of inerrancy and infallibility. One wonders why anyone desires to retain the term when he rejects the meaning.

Much could be said at this point about the use of erroneous exegesis of such passages as John 5, 29; 20,21; II Timothy 3,15,16. In these passages Jesus and Paul say that the Scriptures testify to Christ, that they are written that you might believe, that they are able to make wise unto salvation and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. As to the scope of these and similar passages, let this be said: They indicate the Scriptures as the object of our search. When we read what Scriptures say — and take them in their intended sense at their face value — then in them you find testimony of Christ, wisdom unto salvation, instruction *et al.* But where is the external criterion by which one eliminates what is not intended to instruct in righteousness and to teach about God and His works, and by which one "shells out" the truth? *All Scripture is profitable . . .* Scripture does not itself distinguish as to what is authoritative and what is not. It is all authoritative.

In this connection we cannot avoid mentioning the so-called Law-Gospel criterion of truth in Scripture. If it's either Law or Gospel, so this position goes, then it's true. If not, then one doesn't have to believe it. But, we wonder, where do the criteria of Law and Gospel come from in the first place? From the reliable or the unreliable parts of Scripture? Who decides what is Law and what is Gospel, if the decision rests on prior decisions as to the portions of Scripture that God really wants us to accept as His revealed truth?

Now as to the criterion of faith. Whatever has to do with faith, so the position goes, must be accepted as inerrant Word of God. But the questions arise: Whose faith? What kind of faith? Saving faith? Our little son, we trust, has saving faith. But he doesn't believe explicitly at this time in what Scripture says about the Trinity, or Holy Communion, or Original sin, or the Satanic Powers, or most other dogmas of the Church. Since he believes in Jesus as Lord, how could anyone censure him as he grows older, should he deny the Real Presence, or the need for Infant Baptism — if he should feel that what Scripture says on these things is not necessary for his faith?

The reply at this juncture is, I suppose, that these things are all a part of the circle of faith. But who decides the circle of faith? There are, for example, N.T. scholars of enormous capabilities and fantastic professional accomplishments who contend that the earliest Church in Jerusalem did not have the Lord's Supper as Corinth did, and that the Synoptic testimony to the Lord's Supper is merely what the Church of the late first century *believed* about the Lord's Supper, not what Jesus actually had taught. The Lord's Supper, *as we know it,* so the scholars contend, is a development of history — *it is something historical* in Scripture. And, of course, Scripture is supposedly not trustworthy in things historical.

There is not an article of faith in the Lutheran Confessions that we know of which cannot be set aside on this same basis; namely, the conclusion of certain scholars that the presence of a teaching in N.T. documents merely shows what the later N.T. church believed as opposed to what the earliest Church believed Jesus taught (we really don't know what Jesus Himself taught, they say). The doctrine is allegedly itself a development of history. Who can say, then, what ought be believed, if any Christian is free to distinguish in Scripture between what is record of history, geography, etc., and what concerns faith? With the premise that Scripture is authoritative for matters of faith, but not for matters of history, that anyone should assert that his judgment or his Church's judgment on what concerns faith is right as opposed to another's judgment is purest subjectivity if not arrogance.

But, the reply comes, the Holy Spirit guides into all truth, despite an erring Scripture. One can only reply: who says so? Does a reliable or an unreliable part of Scripture speak of the Holy Spirit, predicate His existence, and delineate His activity? What is the external criterion for ascertaining what must be believed in Scripture about the Holy Spirit and His work? Is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit a matter of saving faith? (Our little son doesn't believe explicitly in the Holy Spirit — although he doesn't deny Him, either.) How can one be sure that the Holy Spirit guided only the Lutherans of the 16th century to formulate the truths of an erring Scripture in the great confessions? If numbers count, why isn't the Roman Catholic Church right, in its decrees of Trent and in its developing theology with its doctrine of "the living Spirit in the Church," by virtue of which doctrine what the Catholic Church now teaches is supposedly what God is revealing as truth (cf. the assumption of Mary). On what basis can one deny that the Holy Spirit leads the Reformed churches in their approach to Scripture, which we castigate as a mixing of Law and Gospel? If truth must be sifted from an erring Scripture, may not the Holy Spirit now be leading the Wisconsin Synod, as well as the Missouri Synod, as well as the Lutheran World Federation, as well as the World Council of Churches?

Given the approach that Scripture is not authoritative except when it speaks to matters of faith and ethic, we must forget everything that Scripture states about teaching the truth, avoiding false prophets, causing divisions contrary to the doctrine one has been taught from Scripture, and we must let everyone under the supposed guidance of the Holy Spirit arrive at his own creed and code of ethics as he finds them in the reliable (to him) portions of Scripture.

Springfield, Illinois

Elmer J. Moeller

Italian Films

By ANNE HANSEN

FOR MANY YEARS Hollywood was the undisputed film capital of the world. Recently, however, the situation has changed. Now many of the major studios, with their multimillion-dollar equipment, stand empty and deserted; or they are used either for the making of television programs or to complete films which, in large part, have been photographed on location in areas far removed from Hollywood. One need only read the entries in the film festivals held annually here and abroad to realize that France, England, Germany, the USSR, India, Japan, and Italy have become strong competitors in a market which at one time was predominantly American.

The growth of the motion-picture industry in Italy has been remarkable. During World War II film-making came to a complete standstill. In the immediate postwar period three noteworthy films — *Open City, Paisan,* and *To Live in Peace* — won worldwide acclaim for their searching and pitiless study of the effects and aftereffects war has on the human body and the human spirit. This was followed by a period of nationwide economic depression which all but wiped out the Italian film industry. In the late 1950s an influx of foreign companies and foreign capital brought new life and vitality into a paralyzed enterprise. Today the Italian motion-picture business is enjoying unprecedented prosperity. The vast facilities of Cinnecitta and other major studios are being used by Italian and American producers, and the Italian countryside has been the setting for many important productions.

Federico Fellini has been called the most brilliant of the small group of directors who have been responsible for the revival of the Italian film industry. Although he began his career under the tutelage of Roberto Rosselini, he goes far beyond his famous teacher in his stark portrayal of the manners and morals of our time. He has said that he considers the motion picture "the magic art" which makes "shadows come alive" and as the art form by means of which he can "best portray modern man." Speaking specifically of *La Dolce Vita — The Sweet Voice* (Aster), which he wrote, produced, and directed, Fellini declares, "I wanted to put the thermometer to a sick world." If his readings are accurate, ours is indeed a sick world and a decadent society. *La Dolce Vita* presents a series of shocking episodes in the life of a reporter in his swift descent into debauchery. With few exceptions, the characters are completely corrupt, morally bankrupt, and utterly ruthless in their senseless, frenetic, and hopeless quest for pleasure and self-indulgence. Technically this is an outstanding film. The acting is superb, the direction is sensitive and sure, and the photography is magnificent. English dialog and English subtitles have been dubbed into the sound track. But surely every thoughtful and discriminating adult must come away from this disturbing indictment of modern life in the Eternal City with a feeling of aversion and depression. And one must ask whether this is a well-balanced, constructive indictment designed to awaken viewers to the need for a return to the moral concepts that are fundamental to a Christian culture. Or is this merely another deliberate exploitation of the risque and the sensational? What is the answer?

We roll back the years to the thirteenth century as we contemplate the life story of a man of peace. Francis Bernadone, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, was born in Assisi in 1182. He died there in 1226 and was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1228. The founder of the Order of the Franciscans, he is revered as the patron saint of animals and animal shelters. The story of his early years, his renunciation of wealth and comfort, his work among the friendless and the lowly, and his dedication to the rule of the Franciscans — "Leave all, and follow Me" — is told with commendable restraint and fidelity in *Francis of Assisi* (20th Century-Fox, Michael Curtiz).

Even a cursory examination of current publications must make one realize that for a number of years the study of problems peculiar to adolescence has been dealt with exhaustively by educators, clergymen, physicians, and psychiatrists. The legitimate stage and the motion-picture screen have used their "new" freedom to explore these delicate and controversial subjects. How effective have these explorations been — either in books or in plays? How effective *can* they be? The heartaches and frustrations of youth are very real, but they are inexorably bound up with the difficult process of growing up. I would be the first to applaud an honest, constructive study of an age-old problem. But I cannot applaud *Splendor in the Grass* (Warners, Elia Kazan), which is adapted from an original screen play by William Inge. It seems to me that this crude, exaggerated, and artificial portrayal of youth must be distasteful to every age group.

The Devil at Four O'Clock (Columbia, Mervyn Le Roy) is a colorful, action-packed adventure film which stars Spencer Tracy and Frank Sinatra. *Back Street* (U-I, David Miller), a hodgepodge of slush, corn, and mixed-up moral values, is based on the once popular novel by Fannie Hurst. *The Young Doctors* (UA, Phil Karlson) is noteworthy only for a distinguished performance by Frederic March.

The Pilgrim

"All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side"
—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

By O. P. KRETZMANN

Dear Son:

I hardly know how to begin my Christmas letter this year . . . Yesterday it was long after midnight when I finally got to bed, and this morning I was wide awake before dawn . . . Quietly I went to make some coffee and to listen to the man from New York who talks about war and trouble and hate over the radio every morning before the music comes . . . At the end of his report — "no change in the Berlin crisis" — "fighting continues in Algeria" — a man from Chicago said that heavy snow was falling in Iowa and Wisconsin and that before night it would come to our town . . . Perhaps, I thought, the coming of the snow, as every year, would give me a chance to think about Christmas . . . I tried it last week when the big white reindeer appeared on State Street and the windows of the stores turned red and green and gold overnight, but somehow the real Christmas is so far away from gold and silk and toys that I could think of nothing but the people for whom also this Christmas would be only the memory of loss and the present hurt of loneliness . . . Only tonight, with the rain and snow against our windows, can I remember how it really was . . . the winter silence, the stars at midnight, the mother and the Child, the quiet animals, the light and men following . . . This is the way it was . . . the way God wanted it and wants it even now . . . This is the way Christmas was — and is — far, infinitely far, from the radio and State Street. . .

Sometimes I try to imagine what things will be like when you finally read these Christmas letters . . . There are some friends of mine, good servants of the Child, who say that we are now living in the last times and that you and I will have to look forward to the great and final years of storm over the earth . . . Perhaps they are right . . . it really looks that way this November night in 1961 . . . the reaping of the bitter harvest, the whips of judgment . . . There is an air of finality about them . . . more than a touch of the cosmic and eternal . . . The universe trembles, and who will deny that it may be due to the coming of His feet? . . .

But I do not believe that you ought to think very much about that . . . and certainly not worry over it . . . Our peering over God's shoulder to see what He is doing is one of the things that He lets us do because He is our Father . . . We understand just as little of it, however, as you do when you stand at my desk and look to see what I am doing . . . He is forever our Father, and we are forever His children, and so we shall always be a little puzzled about His plans for the world . . . No matter how long you live and how wise you may become, you will always be standing at the edge of time and history looking up . . . and if only you continue to look up, you will be all right . . .

Besides, Christmas for all your years will never depend on what is happening in the world . . . That's one great thing about it . . . It is a deep, inner, personal secret between God and you . . . a great and mysterious thing . . . Perhaps, when you read this, you will remember that sometimes, when the day was clear, you and I walked down the street to the hill to watch the big trains go by and see the sun go down over the valley and the stars come out one by one . . . Now the great and strange mystery about Christmas is that God, who lit the stars and threw the planets whirling into space and built the quiet hills and set the seas in their places, became, suddenly, one night at midnight, in a stable, a little baby . . . smaller, much smaller, than you are now . . . utterly helpless and dependent upon His mother . . . You could have picked Him up in your arms that night . . . You could have felt his tiny heart beating . . . small yet already great enough to love the world . . . large enough to take all of us in . . . ready, even on that night, to be the target for a spear . . . so that you and I might have Christmas . . .

And so Christmas will always be an inner mysterious thing . . . something that can really be most at home in the hearts of children . . . When you read this, you will be growing up, and you will be for a few years ashamed of childish things . . . That is only natural — we have all passed through that time of life . . . The pity of it is that some people never get over it . . . They grow up to be smart rather than wise, sophisticated rather than intelligent, and in their tragic hurry to put away some of the childish things which all of us must set aside with the maturing years, they put away, too, the great things they ought to keep, especially at Christmas time, the wonder and faith, the simple joy of the simple heart, the gift of believing . . .

Something like that must always be in your heart when Christmas comes . . . holy, humbly, and infinitely wise . . . And then He will be born again in your heart, as He has always been in all men who have lost the meaning of His coming . . . The trembling star will always look down upon this miracle . . . And even though men still weave a crown of thorns for Him and His manger drips red, you can always have the kindled star and the waiting heart.